

Sudan sends envoys to Arab states

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military strongman said Sunday he has dispatched emissaries to some Arab countries in an effort to find an end to the war in the Gulf, the official news agency reported. The Sudan News Agency quoted Omar Hassan Al-Bashir as saying he has sent envoys to Yemen, Libya and other Arab countries which he did not name in search of a formula to end the fighting between U.S.-led multinational forces and Iraq. General Bashir, who spoke at a press conference for the local media, expressed the urgency of ending the 10-day-old war now before it spreads to the whole Arab world. The Sudanese government has sympathized with Iraq and hundreds of thousands of Sudanese have marched in support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and denounced the United States for its involvement in the Gulf war. Gen. Bashir launched a vitriolic attack on the U.S.-led forces and accused them of hitting civilian targets in Iraq. "The malice of the imperialist states towards the Arab and Islamic countries was reflected in their destructive assault on civilian targets and unarmed civilians in Iraq," Gen. Bashir said.

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U.S. planes blast Kuwaiti oil facilities

Little immediate impact seen on growing oil slick

Combined agency dispatches

THE UNITED STATES said Sunday its navy and air force had blown up Kuwaiti oil facilities in a bid to stop Iraq from pumping millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf. But there was no definite indication the flow of oil had in fact stopped.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf told reporters in Riyadh Sunday evening that the facilities were bombed Saturday night. He produced video tapes to prove that the oil flow was ebbing from the facilities, but experts and officials in the region reported the same evening that the oil slick was indeed growing in size.

General Schwarzkopf told reporters the facilities were bombed late Saturday by F-111 warplanes. He said the planes targeted a complex of offshore pipes linking the oil fields with a tanker loading buoy. Oil and environmental officials said such an attack was the best way to halt the flow of crude, he said.

During a sea battle Friday night with an Iraqi boat near the offshore oil-loading terminal for supertankers, the U.S. navy inadvertently set fire to the terminal.

al, burning off much of the oil that had been spilling into the Gulf, he said.

Gen. Schwarzkopf identified the targets of Saturday night's attack as two oil pipe manifolds located eight kilometres off the Kuwaiti coast. He showed videotapes of "smart" bombs that zeroed in on the manifolds.

A videotape he said was taken after the bombing indicated much less oil was flowing from the loading buoy.

"This is now the oil slick coming out, and you can see it is vastly reduced from the very, very, thick, murky slick that was coming out," Gen. Schwarzkopf said of the videotape.

"You can see the blue water in between... that is much, much different than what we were seeing before," he said, adding he hoped it indicated the attack had been successful.

The attack set off fire that the general predicted would burn for "more than 24 hours."

He said he has been told the oil slick is now 56 kilometres long and 16 kilometres wide.

In response to a question about

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Iraq assails U.N. chief and vows to smash allied forces

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ ON SUNDAY beld United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar responsible for the "ugly crimes" of allied forces that it said indiscriminately attack civilian, economic and religious targets.

Iraq's new Mother of Battles Radio carried the text of a message from Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to the U.N. chief that said: "It is truly a disgrace for the international organisation that such deliberate crimes are committed under the veil of Security Council resolutions."

The accusations came as allied warplanes kept up an unrelenting bombardment of Iraq. Explosions lit the night sky above Basra, the southern port city that also is Iraq's military headquarters for the Kuwait theatre.

Iraq's official news agency said the flares were seen 40 kilometres away in Khorramshahr. It said anti-aircraft batteries, that can usually be heard in

the city, were silent Sunday. The only sounds were the bomb blasts and the roar of aircraft.

Iraq said it downed three allied warplanes or missiles Saturday during air raids on civilian targets and residential areas. The allied command, which denies targeting civilian areas, said no allied planes were shot down Saturday but said allied forces shot down four Iraqi planes.

Iraq threatened Sunday to carry out lightning strikes against allied troops and hinted it might attack with chemical and biological weapons.

It also said that while "Iraq's heroes are confronting the enemy's barbaric attacks," the country's missile forces continue to launch attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia "to make its enemies pay a high price sooner and not later."

Mr. Aziz reminded Mr. Perez de Cuellar in his message that he told the U.N. chief on Aug. 31

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Allies will pay heavy price, Iraqi envoy says

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuters

AMMAN — Scorning the United States, a senior Iraqi envoy said Sunday that Washington and its allies would suffer tens of thousands of deaths in a long Gulf war.

"There is a feeling of disappointment, failure and defeat inside the evil American soul," said Nouri Ismail Alwais, Baghdad's ambassador to Jordan and a close associate of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

He said Washington and its Western and Arab allies would find themselves in a dangerous and unexpected trap which would materialise "in the form of tens of thousands of killed and hundreds of thousands of wounded."

"This trap was not programmed in their computers or in their documents," Mr. Alwais told Reuters in an interview. Iraq has said its resolve will outlast the allied onslaught.

Iraq has repeatedly spoken of a long and bloody war. U.S. and allied officials in recent days have sought to dampen early euphoria that the war, launched on Jan. 17, might be over

fast and warned their publics to expect setbacks in a future ground battle for Kuwait.

Mr. Alwais said previous American assertions of swift and decisive military action had proved a "big lie" and described more recent statements as a sign of weakness.

"This battle will not be as they wanted for days or months," Mr. Alwais said. "We will not allow the United States and its allies to achieve the objectives of their aggression. We are confident and resolved to win."

He said there was no change in Iraq's position on Kuwait, which Baghdad has vowed never to leave and has linked to a settlement of all other Middle East issues.

Referring to initiatives to halt fighting, including a call by Iran for a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Mr. Alwais said they would come to nothing.

"We say that the United States, which prevented any serious initiative before the attack, will ban any new and serious initiative," the envoy said.

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A scene from the site of an Iraqi missile attack on Tel Aviv

Israel ponders ways to protect itself from Scuds

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL, TARGET of six Iraqi missile attacks, said Sunday it was working round the clock on ways to protect itself against rocket barrages.

The Jewish state stood by its policy of restraint so far in the 11-day-old Gulf war but government ministers said the army would retaliate against Iraq when the "time was right."

At dusk Sunday, cars leaving Tel Aviv jammed a 60-kilometre stretch of road to occupied Jerusalem. Many have abandoned Tel Aviv, the prime target of almost nightly missile barrages.

Foreign Minister David Levy told reporters after a weekly cabinet session the government was considering "every hour" ways to end the Scud missile attacks.

Soviet minister says war in accord with resolutions

WASHINGTON (R) — New Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, after talks with his U.S. counterpart Saturday, attempted to smooth differences with Washington over U.S. attacks on Iraq, saying the war was in accord with U.N. resolutions.

Mr. Bessmertnykh and Secretary of State James Baker told reporters they discussed the Soviet crackdown in the Baltics, arms control and a summit planned for next month in Moscow until after Mr. Bessmertnykh meets President George Bush Monday.

"I have never put in doubt the commitment by the Soviet Union or the United States or any other member of the alliance to the Security Council resolutions," the new Soviet minister said at the State Department with Mr. Baker standing at his side.

"I think what's being done is in complete accord with those resolutions. They are intended to free Kuwait from oppression," Mr. Bessmertnykh said.

But, he added, "the sources of the concern that I have expressed before is that there may be a danger of the conflict going more in the direction of the destruction... of Iraq and in the direction of involving more casualties on both sides."

"So we have to think about it... and try to avoid it," he said.

"You have to weigh what the enemy expects from you against the implications of that, the scope, the timing and the methods," Mr. Levy said.

Defence Minister Moshe Arens told the cabinet of efforts to improve the performance of U.S. Patriot missiles, the only defence against Iraq's Scuds.

The United States airlifted to Israel extra Patriot batteries, manned by U.S. soldiers to train Israelis, a week ago after the first two attacks.

Iraq has fired at least 25 missiles at heavily populated areas in Israel since the war began on Jan. 17. Four people were killed and 200 wounded in the attacks that damaged more than 4,000 apartments.

"No new decision was taken by the government in regard to its policy," cabinet secretary

Eliyakim Rubinstein said.

The cabinet heard that the government was not committed to refrain from retaliating against Iraq despite efforts by other countries to prevent Israeli action, a government source said.

Mr. Arens told ministers the army would retaliate whenever it chose while considering all the circumstances, the source said.

Mr. Arens said the teams operating the Patriots were improving but the U.S. missiles could not ensure 100 per cent immunity.

The Scuds, fired from western Iraq, bad conventional warheads as in previous strikes but the army said Israelis would continue to guard against the chemical weapons Iraq has threatened to use against Israel.

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Iraqi border post remains sealed off

Exception made for Tunisians

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Hopes that Iraq would reopen its border crossing with Jordan and allow over 3,000 people stranded at the frontier post in Jordan's northeast did not materialise Sunday.

Instead, the Iraqis lifted the closure for only about 70 Tunisian nationals and two Jordanian families with the body of a two-year-old child who died of kidney failure, officials said.

According to Jordanian border officials, Iraqi authorities at the border post at Trebil are insisting on a special permission for everyone who wants to leave the country, including those who already have exit permits.

Obtaining such permission would warrant a trip back to Baghdad from Trebil for those already at the border. In view of the shortage of fuel in Iraq following the allied air assault which hit the country's refineries, a return journey to Baghdad is almost out of question for many of them, officials pointed out.

According to Iraqi sources, an interim arrangement was being considered under which the Iraqi Ministry of Interior would open a temporary office at Trebil or Rutba, further inside Iraqi territory, to clear those already at the frontier.

"The situation in Baghdad does not permit any haste in having such arrangements in place," said the source referring to the ongoing bombardment of the Iraqi capital.

While the Iraqi border officials appeared to have considered the case of Jordanians as special in view of the death of the child while waiting at the border, there was no immediate explanation why an exception was also made to the Tunisians.

Arab diplomatic sources in Amman suggested that the permission for the Tunisians support for Baghdad in the war against the allies (Tunisian President Zelin Al Abidine Ben Ali Saturday strongly criticised the American-led allied forces and called on the Security Council to order an immediate ceasefire in the 10-day-old war).

But the diplomatic sources could not explain why Iraq did not apply the same parameters to Jordanians, Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Yemenis and Sudanese.

International news agencies meanwhile reported that two Jordanians were injured in an allied air attack while they were travelling between the towns of Rutba and Trebil (see page 3).

The Associated Press quoted Mandoob Abbadi, president of the Jordanian Doctors Association and head of the Professional Associations, as saying that three Jordanians were wounded in the incident. Dr. Abbadi said the three were part of a Jordanian medical team that had gone to Iraq last week and were returning home.

One of the three, Sultan Shawakeh, told the AP after reaching Amman that the injuries were not serious.

King: Very little progress towards ceasefire in Gulf

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Sunday there had been little progress towards a Gulf war ceasefire, but he vowed to continue efforts to halt the allied assault on Iraq.

King Hussein told a news conference for French reporters there was "not very much progress at all" on his proposal last week for a temporary halt to the fighting.

"But the call, I believe, is echoed by many and one still hopes there will be a pause in hostilities to give diplomacy and political action... a chance."

"Let's hope it is not too late, and we will continue to do our utmost to keep hope alive and to strive for peace," the King said.

Efforts to end the war should coincide with attempts to resolve "many of the crises in this region that have long been crying for attention," the King said, referring to joint talks on the Gulf war and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The United States has rejected linkage between the two issues. But the King remarked: "It doesn't take too much imagination to see how the two are connected."

The King noted that the allied attack on Iraq was based on United Nations Security Council resolutions and called for equal treatment of U.N. resolutions on the Palestinian problem.

"After 23 years of waiting for

Security Council resolutions to be implemented... I believe it is the right of all Arabs to expect of the world a definite commitment to deal with that problem on its own merits in the nearest possible future."

Jordan has condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait but refused to join the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition and also denounced the foreign military presence in the Gulf. This stand has brought in heavy political and economic pressure on Jordan.

"Maybe Jordan is being punished, but I believe that Jordanians have their heads high," the King told the French reporters Sunday.

"Jordan has a history of a total commitment to the cause of peace and reconciliation in the whole region and a fight for Arabs' rights throughout its past. Jordan was never against any. Jordan was for a better Arab World and for a healthier atmosphere to exist amongst Arab brothers. Jordan is passing through very very difficult times. I do not underestimate them. I believe when finally the truth comes out about everything, many will regret the course that they have adopted towards this country and the actions they have taken against this country and I believe (with a) clear conscience we have done our utmost. We sought peace and did not seek the

destruction of our region and maybe any disaster for the world as we tried to avert that to the best of our ability to avert that... The price we have to pay hurts me but I believe that I am one Arab Jordanian together with all the Jordanian family bearing these burdens bravely and courageously with our heads high."

The King repeated that within 48 hours of Iraq's seizure of Kuwait, he had secured Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's promise to withdraw and negotiate his grievances with Kuwait.

"And following that, everything was done to stifle our attempts to move, as if somehow the stage was set for preparation for war," he said.

Asked how he viewed the role of Iran in the crisis compared to Jordan's role and if ever planes from the coalition or planes from Iraq take refuge, will Jordan have the same policy as Iran which said it would keep the aircraft until after the war, the King said.

"This has not happened as yet, and I doubt that it will happen. But on the other hand, as far as relations with Iran, our foreign minister is there today. This is the first visit by our foreign minister to Tehran and we are very happy indeed that relations are restored and we hope that relations in the

(Continued on page 2)

Iran unveils plan linking peace to halt in Jewish settlement

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran's parliament speaker Sunday unveiled a Gulf war peace plan calling for an immediate ceasefire, simultaneous withdrawal by both sides and a halt to Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

The official, Mahdi Karrubi, also asserted that Iran "will certainly fight Israel along with other Muslim states" if the Israelis enter the war against Iraq, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said.

The agency said Mr. Karrubi's five-point peace plan proposes deploying Islamic forces to supervise the mutual troop withdrawal and lifting the embargo on shipments of food and medicine to Iraq.

"We will ask for the assistance of parliaments around the world," Mr. Karrubi said of his initiative.

He was quoted as expressing regret about "the killing of innocent Muslim people and the destruction of Muslim wealth and resources" by the U.S.-led multinational force.

The possibility of a ceasefire was on agenda of talks between Iranian officials and Jordan Fore-

ign Minister Taher Al Masri, who arrived in Tehran Sunday.

His two-day visit is the first by a Jordanian official to Iran in 10 years. The two states resumed diplomatic ties earlier this month, ending a rupture initiated by Iran because of Jordan's support of Iraq during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war (see page 3).

Mr. Karrubi said his peace plan calls for a simultaneous withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and allied troops from the Gulf region. In their place, he proposed that troops from unspecified Islamic countries would deploy in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian news agency, monitored in Nicosia, said Mr. Karrubi also proposed the formation of a committee of Islamic representatives to supervise the withdrawals.

The plan seeks an unconditional halt to "the Jewish influx" into occupied Palestine and the formation of a committee comprising Islamic states to support the "liberation-seeking struggles" of Palestinians throughout the occupied territories.

The agency did not specify the duties of the committee. It also

did not elaborate on the other points or indicate how the speaker would push his plan.

Later Sunday, state-run Tehran Radio said the confiscation of Iraqi warplanes after they landed in Iran Saturday was proof of the country's insistence on remaining neutral in the war.

"The policy pertaining to the confiscation of the aircraft of any of the warring sides that make an emergency landing in Iran, until the war is over, indicates our country's principled stand towards a war which is ignited by unholy motives," the radio said.

Mr. Masri, on his arrival in Tehran, told reporters that both Iran and Jordan shared borders with Iraq and thus had common concerns about the war.

He said Jordan was fully observing U.N.-approved economic sanctions against Iraq.

Jordan and Iran, which are neutral in the conflict, have been spearheading efforts by Islamic and non-aligned states to arrange a ceasefire. Both countries support the United Nations demand for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, but are against the U.S.-led military attack to enforce it.

Dr. Van Praet said the president's flight followed more than 21 hours of heavy fighting between loyalist government soldiers and rebels seeking his ouster. He said Mr. Siad Barre's departure was witnessed by two members of the agency's six-person medical team working in Mogadishu.

Telex and telephone links to Mogadishu have been cut since the USC — one of several groups battling to end Mr. Siad Barre's 21-year rule — stepped up their offensive on Dec. 30.

A spokesman for the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) —

(Continued on page 3)

Siad Barre flees; rebels claim control of Mogadishu

NAIROBI (Agencies) — Rebels Sunday claimed to have won control of Somalia's government after driving the president from his official residence and seizing the radio station following heavy fighting in the capital.

However, loyalist government troops still controlled the airport, according to Western doctors working in the city, Mogadishu.

"Last night... the government and the responsibility of the Somali people were taken over by the USC (United Somali Congress) movement. We are addressing you from Radio Mogadishu, the voice of the Somali people," a rebel spokesman announced over what it said was formerly government-owned Radio Mogadishu.

The rebel broadcast, which was monitored in Nairobi, Kenya, said the USC seized power at 8:30 p.m. (1730 GMT) Saturday. The rebel announcer did not identify himself.

The announcement came more than 12 hours after the rebels

seized the presidential palace.

President Mohammad Siad Barre and a small group of military men fled the mansion in a tank 15 minutes before the seizure, but it was not immediately known where they escaped to, said Stevan Van Praet, a Doctors without Borders representative in Mombasa, Kenya. Van Praet coordinates the agency's work in Mogadishu.

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(Continued on page 3)

Ministry finalises additional energy conservation steps

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is expected to launch a new campaign in the coming few days to rationalise public consumption of oil products and electricity, according to ministry officials who preferred anonymity.

The campaign, which is quite natural under the present circumstances, should by no means cause any panic or be misinterpreted by anyone, they said.

The country has sufficient fuel to last many months and there is no need to raise prices of any of the oil products, the officials said.

Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh was quoted by Reuters news agency as saying that the country has reasonable reserves of oil but did not elaborate. He was commenting on the closure of the Iraqi border with Jordan and the stoppage of all movements in either direction.

Iraq closed its border with Jordan last Tuesday, preventing trucks from bringing across oil which Jordan imports from Iraq. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Thabet Al Taher had said the Kingdom has sufficient supplies of crude oil and oil products.

Ministry of Youth outlines preparations for any emergency

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Youth Secretary-General 'Eid Al-Fayez Sunday outlined the role of the youth centres and clubs in preparing for any emergency circumstances that might arise in light of the current situation in the region.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, he said these clubs and centres had shown good organisation and demonstrated their readiness to interact with any kind of challenges facing them or their country.

He said that since the beginning of the Gulf crisis, the ministry had contacted various centres, clubs and departments in various governorates of the Kingdom in order to be able to define their capabilities and needs, if any, to prepare for their services in emergency cases.

The youth centres and clubs, Fayez said, launched blood donation campaigns, collected medicine, food supplies and civil defence equipment from the public to prepare for any emergency.

Fayez said the clubs and the centres have formed teams in charge of rescue, national guidance, blood donation and protection of public and private property in times of emergency.

The buildings and facilities of the youth institutions, he said, will be used in times of emergency as evacuation centres and hospitals.

He said the ministry has set up operation rooms in various places in the governorates in addition to a central operation room in Amman. The central operation room will be directly connected to the Higher Defence Council and will be coordinating with the administrative governors, he said.

The operation rooms are supplied with lists carrying the names of the volunteers and their telephone numbers, Fayez said. The rooms will be operating 24 hours a day, he added.

Crossing to Syria remains normal

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Interior has denied knowledge of 30 Jordanians being turned back from the Syrian border as was reported by news agency Sunday.

Reuters news agency said Syria refused entry of at least 30 Jordanians in an apparent how of anger over criticism in some Jordanian newspapers over the involvement in the Gulf war.

The agency, which quoted an official Jordanian source for the report, said that travellers were turned back from the southern border post of Dara' after trying to enter from Jordan. Other Jordanians had abandoned the crossing until the situation was clear, the agency said.

Contacted by the Jordan Times, the Public Security Department's Aliens and Border Department said it had no knowledge of the incident either. Reuters quoted a Syrian embassy official in Amman as denying the report and maintaining that travel requirements had not been changed.

"Syria will always keep its door open for all Arabs," the embassy official said.

The Syrian media had reacted angrily to criticism from Jordanian parliamentarians and newspapers over Syria's policy on the Gulf war and the border incident was interpreted by observers here as linked to the Jordanian media's criticism of the Syrian stand.

Earlier, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, retracted a report quoting an Israeli army radio as saying that demonstrations swept Syrian towns in protest against Syria's involvement and the ongoing aggression on Iraq.

Petra said later "since it was not the agency's policy to quote Israeli sources, it was cancelling the report."

Refugees report allied raid on main Baghdad-Jordan road

RUWEISHED (R) — Allied aircraft bombed the main highway from Baghdad to the Jordanian frontier Sunday, refugees crossing the border said.

An official Jordanian source said two civilians were injured and a Jordanian refrigeration truck returning to Amman was destroyed in the raid between the remote desert town of Al Rutbah and the border 120 kilometres to the west.

Jordanian lawyer Sultan Shawakfeh carried one of the injured men across the border in a battered black Mercedes car with shattered windows. The man, with cuts on his hands, laid stretched out on a seat, occasionally opening his eyes but not speaking.

Shawakfeh said they had been caught in the raid at about nine a.m. (0700 GMT). "The bombardment was taking place over our heads on the main road. There was a lot of smoke, a lot of fire and a lot of sand thrown up," he said at Jordan's Ruweished border post.

Allied planes have bombed Iraqi installations near the Jordanian border since the Gulf war erupted on Jan. 17.

Without proper food or shelter on the Iraqi side since Baghdad closed its border last Tuesday. In Amman, a government official said Iraq had ordered refugees to return to Baghdad for exit visas to leave the country.

"According to information available the Iraqis have let into Jordan 80 Tunisians who had exit visas and asked the others to go to (Baghdad) for approval to leave," he told Reuters.

The Iraqi embassy in Amman said it knew nothing of this. Roweished has been the main escape route for Gulf crisis evacuees who have braved allied air raids to escape from Iraq and Kuwait. More than 870,000 Third World refugees have fled since Iraq's takeover of Kuwait in August.

A delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) waited in Amman for permission from Baghdad to mount a medical relief operation in Iraq.

"We will proceed with setting up our medical operation as soon as we get the green light from the Iraqis," ICRC delegation head Werner Kaspar told Reuters correspondent Rana Sabbagh.



TALKING PEACE: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who briefed the King on the outcome of his efforts and other world leaders to find a solution to the Gulf crisis. King Hussein and Ortega also discussed developments of war in the Gulf and means of ending it peacefully. The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the King's political advisor Adnan Ahn Odeh, Information Minister and Acting Foreign Minister Ibrahim Izzeddine and the former Nicaraguan Foreign Minister. Ortega arrived here Sunday morning on a short visit to Jordan for talks with senior Jordanian officials on the Gulf crisis.

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Princess Basma visits social centre in Maan

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, president of the Jordanian Save the Children's Fund, Sunday visited the Fund's centre in Maan and inspected various programmes and activities. She was also briefed on a plan for improving the social services in the area.

Princess Basma thanked the citizens for their cooperation and their readiness to adapt to new changes and stressed the importance of the role played by voluntary societies at all times.

She highlighted the need for the societies to continue to offer their services and to improve them to suit the new circumstances prevailing in the country.

Princess Basma expressed appreciation to the civil defence cadres for their efforts in training people on methods of public safety.

DFLP calls for ending ban on Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Sunday called on the countries supporting the Arab solution to the Gulf crisis to break the U.N. embargo on Iraq. Salah 'Abd al-Razek, the DFLP spokesman, told the Jordan News Agency that the DFLP has called on all countries supporting an Arab solution to the crisis to break the U.N. economic embargo and to provide economic and military support for Iraq.

A statement issued by the DFLP called for imposing economic, and political sanctions on aggressor countries, led by the United States, and urged Egypt, Syria and Morocco to withdraw their troops from the battle front and to send them to fight alongside Iraq.

The statement also called on the Soviet Union, and China to abandon their current policy on the American aggression against Iraq and to join Algeria, Libya, Jordan, Yemen and Sudan in their call for convening the United Nations Security Council to end hostilities against Iraq.

The statement also called on them to support the call for an international peace conference on the Middle East and provide protection to the Palestinian people in their homeland.

Court to reconsider women's federation election

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Members of the Jordanian Women's Federation have won an appeal made to the Higher Court of Justice to reconsider municipal and national election results held last July.

An interim committee will take charge of the federation's business for a period of two months until new elections are held, Safa Qusbi, member of the executive committee of the Amman chapter of the federation told the Jordan Times.

In their July appeal, plaintiffs asked the Higher Court of Justice to consider the election results null and void. The plaintiffs, which include former federation executive committee members as well as current members of municipal executive members, charged that elections were manipulated by gerrymandering as well as a misinterpretation of the federation's charter.

The women charged that the Ministry of Social Welfare, which supervises the federation's activities, had favoured Islamist candidates and had "bent the rules" to suit the Islamist candidates both in the capital and in the seven other municipal councils.

While not all of the municipal councils had voted for Islamist candidates into office, by process of gerrymandering, the plaintiffs charge the Islamists were able to take hold of all seats on the national executive committee, which directs all national federations women's activities.

The plaintiffs, who are for the most part secularist or politically affiliated to leftist groups, say they may not have a chance of changing the situation because current Minister of Social Welfare is a well-known Islamist and "may" decide to side with the Islamists in the federation as the previous minister of social welfare did.

Sunday's court ruling, however, gave the plaintiffs hope that despite the growing influence of Islamists in the government, the justice system would nevertheless remain an independent body.

Siad Barre

(Continued from page 1)

many areas of the battle-torn capital, but that loyalist forces appeared still to control the airport.

"A lot of people are wounded, but it's impossible to say any more about the exact situation," he added.

The USC, the SPM and three other rebel groups joined together in a loose coalition last

Women collect over JD 5,000 to support Iraqis

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Amman chapter of the Jordanian Women's Federation raised over JD 5,000 for the Jordanian Committee in Support of the People of Iraq Sunday at a fund-raising gathering at the Hussein Sports City.

As young women read out poems dedicated to the people of Iraq, many of the about 700 women in the audience wept. Wives and daughters of well-known Jordanian and Palestinian martyrs were visible in the audience.

Local feminist activists, traditional members of the once conservative federation as well as Islamist women joined in a prayer for their Iraqi brethren.

The federation sold the 1,000 tickets printed for the entry to the activity where only water and Arabic coffee was served, at JD 3 per person.

Women in the audience made JD 40 to JD 100 bids for a traditional abaya robe in an effort to raise money. The abayas were donated by different Jordanian dressmakers specialised in tailoring traditional dresses.

Different Jordanian women groups have held fund-raising activities since Aug. 2. In the past two months many of the fund-raising activities have collected substantial amounts of money for the thousands of Jordanians families which have fled to Jordan from Iraq and Kuwait.

Jaljoui inspects Mafraq

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Health Minister Adnan Al Jaljoui Sunday stressed the need for intensifying official and popular efforts to provide health centres with basic requirements to enable them deal with emergencies during the current circumstances.

During a meeting with Mafraq governor, mayor and head of government's departments, Jaljoui said the ministry would do its best to supply all health centres with basic requirements, including technical and medical cadres.

Jaljoui reviewed with department heads the health situation in the governorate and stressed the importance of coordination between the health centres and the civil defence training centres.

At the end of his tour in Mafraq governorate, Jaljoui visited the evacuee camps where he inspected the health situation.

August and vowed to topple Mr. Siad Barre — a former military commander, now in his late 70s, who took power in a bloodless coup in 1969.

Dr. Omar Salaa, USC representative in the eastern Ethiopian city of Dire Dawa, said he believed Mr. Siad Barre would now try and flee by sea or land to Kenya.

"He has no option left," he told Reuters by telephone in Nairobi.

Masri begins Iran visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri arrived in Tehran Sunday at the start of a two-day visit to Iran and told his Iranian counterpart that the Jordanian people have always been keen to hear of the resumption of bilateral relations.

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Masri as saying that the Islamic republic was a strong Islamic state in the region and that it was popular with the Jordanian people.

"Muslim Jordan has always aspired to have the best and strongest ties with your country," Masri said.

On the Gulf crisis Masri said: "Since beginning of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Jordan has urged an Iraqi pullout from the emirate and has sought an Arab solution on the conflict."

Masri arrived in Tehran Sunday on a visit expected to herald a new chapter in Jordanian-Iranian relations and to boost the two countries current endeavour to bring about a halt to the Gulf war.

Masri, who is accompanied by a group of senior ministry officials, is carrying a message to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani from His Majesty King Hussein. The foreign minister will hold talks with senior Iranian officials during his two-day stay in Tehran, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The talks will focus on means of corroborating bilateral relations, the situation in the Gulf and efforts to stop the devastating war, the agency said.

Masri's visit, the first in ten years, follows close on the heel of a decision by Amman and Tehran to resume diplomatic ties broken off at the start of the Iran-Iraq war.

The foreign minister stated here Saturday, on the eve of his trip, that the visit was aimed at speeding up an exchange of ambassadors and the reopening of embassies in Amman and Tehran.

In an interview with Petra, Masri described his visit to

Tehran as significant because Jordan attached great hopes to initiate very strong ties with Iran.

The question of convening an Islamic conference to try to stop the war in the Gulf would come up at the talks which Masri will hold with the Iranian government, according to the agency.

Jordan earlier announced its acceptance of an Iranian call for an emergency meeting by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss an end to the conflict.

According to a Reuters news agency report, Iran and India have separately proposed a break in the hostilities but both also insisted that Iraq should agree to withdraw before any truce can take place.

A number of Islamic countries, which hold membership in the OIC, have sent troops to fight Iraq alongside the U.S.-led coalition and an OIC meeting requires at least the approval of two thirds of the organisation's 46 member nation.

University professors, academics join in protest at official Turkish stand, alliance against Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of university professors and academicians Sunday called at the Turkish embassy in Amman and demanded that Turkey stop assisting the Americans in their aggression on Iraq.

The group led by Dr. Abdul Karim Gharaibeh from the University of Jordan met with the Turkish ambassador to express dismay at Turkey's decision to allow U.S. warplanes to take off from Turkish territory to launch aggression on Iraq and kill Arab and Muslim people, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The delegation pointed out that Iraq had always maintained strong and unique relations with its Muslim Turkish neighbour and have had strong common interests which continue to bind the Arab and Muslim peoples in the two countries.

The members of the group told the ambassador that Turkey holds serious responsibility towards such aggression and demanded that the Ankara government adopt a policy more oriented towards peace and to declare an Islamic initiative to bring about a ceasefire so that the problem can be solved peacefully, Petra said.

Apart from Gharaibeh, the group included Adnan Al Bakhit, Musleh Tarawneh, Hussein Atwan, Mohammad Khatib, Saleh Daradeh, Mustafa Al Shunna, Walid Morally and Munir Hijazi.

Last Friday, the Jordanian — Turkish Society issued a statement denouncing Turkey's biased attitude towards the Western coalition arrayed against Iraq and described the Muslim country's stand as hostile and unjustified.

Radio Jordan Sunday broadcast an interview with former Turkish prime minister Bulent Ecevit in which he stated that the majority of the Turkish population do not support war and that the official Turkish stand reflected the individual position of Turkish President Turgut Ozal.

Iraq had said it held the Turkish government responsible for its aggressive acts on Iraq and Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz described Ankara as acting as subservient to the United States while Ozal reacted by announcing that his country would retaliate in the event of an Iraqi attack.

Muta University President Awad Kheifat last week issued an appeal to the Turkish government and people to stop aggression on Iraq and urged Turkish universities to find a way to help end the Turkish hostile stand against Iraq.

Sudanese offers to help refugees

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Sudanese Red Crescent Society has offered to send Jordan medical teams and medicines to help cope with the task of caring for the evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait, according to the president of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) in Amman, Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura.

Abu Qoura said the offer came in a cable sent to JNRCS and that he has voiced Jordan's deep appreciation of the offer which was coming under critical conditions.

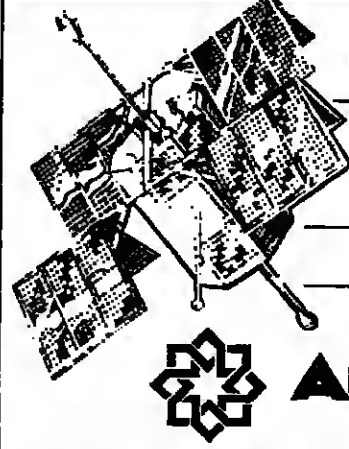
Jordan had given large consign-

ments of relief supplies to the Sudanese people when their country was facing drought and difficult economic conditions. Jordanian teams had also helped build a hospital in Sudan and carry out economic projects to help the local population.

According to JNRCS officials, the Red Crescent Society here had sent Sudan \$5,000 during the drought as a token gift and a show of solidarity. But most of the aid to Sudan came in the form of in-kind assistance directly from the Jordanian government and contributions from Jordanian

citizens. The JNRCS, in conjunction with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, has been operating two camps at Azraq to care for the evacuees, relying on its own resources, assistance and contributions from friendly countries and international organisations.

United Nations officials now estimate the total number of evacuees staying in Jordanian camps at 7,000 but the Kingdom had seen a flood of more than 80,000 evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait over the past five months.

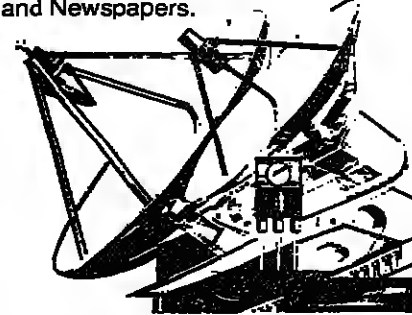


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Choice is obvious, chances are bleak

THE U.S. administration, in its firm insistence to go to war against Iraq, has all along discounted all warnings of an ecological disaster in the Gulf resulting from war. Like all their other contentions regarding the war, Mr. Bush and his lieutenants shunned all the warnings that were sounded of an impending catastrophe should the war start. As early as Nov. 6, His Majesty King Hussein warned that "a war in the Gulf would not only result in devastating human deaths and injuries... it could also lead to an environmental catastrophe the likes of which the world has not experienced since the accident of the Chernobyl nuclear plant."

Even at this late hour, where the waters of the Gulf are covered by a huge slick of oil extending to the shores of Iran and Saudi Arabia, the U.S. and its allies, having initially triggered this disaster by bombing a Norwegian supertanker off the shores of Kuwait, yesterday bombed the Ahmadi oil complex in Kuwait and set it in fire. Now the Ahmadi oil complex and other oil installations targeted by both parties to the war will keep on burning for as long as the war itself would take and beyond.

The U.S. in its war to remove Iraq from Kuwait is bound to use all its firepower to dislodge the Iraqis from that tiny oil-rich land. Iraq, having so far made good all the threats it made before the war, is bound to use all the weapons, and weapon-like means, to retaliate in defence of its position. That country has so far demonstrated that it neither is going to surrender, nor give up Kuwait without a fight to the bitter end.

The U.S. and its allies, indeed the whole world, seem to have no choice. If this mad war continues, and so far we have seen very little of its results, the world will have to pay an enormous price.

According to Dr. Abdullah Touqan of Jordan and a dozen other top world scientists, the war in the Gulf would result in the failure of the monsoons, disruption of photosynthesis, acid rain, contamination of worldwide fresh water supplies, temperature drops of 20 degrees Celsius and "hundreds of millions of deaths" among nations thousands of miles removed from this conflict.

Scientists from all over the world, especially from the U.S. and Canada eye the situation in the Gulf with great concern. Dr. Digby McLaren, a top advisor to the Canadian prime minister, describes the situation as "extremely grave."

The U.S. and its Western allies, responsible for most of the toxic waste poisoning earth and its atmosphere, have a double moral responsibility. The matter extends far beyond Kuwait, Iraq, oil, or a new world order. It threatens humanity everywhere.

The new world order the U.S. seems to usher by continuing this meaningless war will either be built on no world at all, the way we know it, or a world disorder that we will have to navigate through its darkness. The choice is obvious, and the chances are bleak.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

BY announcing that Saddam Hussein cannot hold him hostage and prisoner in his White House offices, President Bush was actually expressing fears that... address to the American nation scheduled for Jan. 31 would be overshadowed by adverse developments in the Gulf, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. Bush is hoping that his address would contain good news to the American people, informing them of great successes in the battles against Iraq and its president; but deep down the American president is afraid that the address to the nation would coincide with reports of heavy casualties among his troops. Should the ground battles start before Jan. 31, said the paper. "No one is holding Bush hostage or prisoner in his office except his own obsession of the war and its outcome and no one is preventing him from taking a courageous step to stop the war which he had started, the paper continued. But if anything, the American president looks as though he is now prisoner of his own miscalculations and is apprehensive of the results and is fearful of the thought that he would be breaking in the news of heavy losses among his men to the American nation by Jan. 31, the paper added. Bush the paper noted, seems to be afraid to hear the orphans, the widows and the bereaved families mourning their dead and receiving corpses instead of their beloved ones. The paper said that Bush can serve the American people and mankind by getting rid of all his evil-minded advisors like Kissinger, and re-examining the situation before the catastrophe can fall on his White House.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday urges Pakistan to pull out its troops from the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf and says that the coalition is designed to harm all the Muslim people everywhere in the world. Jumaa Hammad noted that as a Muslim country Pakistan has always supported Arab just causes; and the Arabs have always supported the Muslim country of Pakistan against external dangers. By declaring his country's support for U.N. Security Council resolutions the Pakistani prime minister is openly supporting American aggression on Iraq, but this could be justified because Pakistan is in need of Security Council support for Pakistan's views over Kashmir, says the writer. However, the presence of Pakistan's troops among the U.S.-led coalition can by no means be justified, since Islamabad realises that the Pakistani troops are in the Arabian Peninsula serving under the American flag and under U.S. commanders intent on causing destruction to an Arab Muslim country. The writer warns that Pakistan would not escape the dangers awaiting the Arab and Muslim nations after the Gulf conflict, and when the Americans would want to introduce and apply the so-called new world order.

Myths of war prove to be hardy survivors

By Peter Pringle

YOUNG though the Gulf war is, a number of myths about the allied air offensive have been showing signs of what the Americans would call "survivability."

For example, the U.S. refuses to estimate enemy civilian casualties, saying they have taken great steps, where possible, to avoid "collateral damage." The Iraqis say the figure is low. But if only one Iraqi was killed for every bombing raid, there would be at least 6,000 dead already.

When the U.S. commanders first mentioned there were 2,000 allied sorties a day against Iraq and Kuwait, it sounded impressive — the greatest air bombardment ever.

"Unprecedented," said the White House. The assessment survives, and it may turn out to be true in the end, but the Pentagon has now admitted that of the 12,000 planes that have flown against the enemy, only 6,000 had specific bombing missions. More revisions are expected.

It was said, before the war, that it could cost the United States \$1bn (£512m) a day, once the fighting started. The figure is still being used, but the Defence Budget Project, a military watchdog group in Washington, has assessed the cost of the air war at around \$100,000 per 24 hours. Flying is cheap, and the bombs come from stocks that may not be replaced. The overall figure could double, even treble, they

say, once a ground war begins, but still not reach \$1bn.

The original estimate was based, very loosely, on projected costs for a war in Europe, which the experts used to think would be about \$2bn a day. A Gulf war looked as though it would cost about half that.

Air superiority is the goal, and U.S. officials, including General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, say the U.S. and its allies now have it. But only 43 Iraqi planes have been confirmed as destroyed, in the air or on the ground. The hundreds remaining might still appear.

If they do, that would be a genuine "tactical surprise" from President Saddam, a far greater surprise than the one

the allies like to say they created by bombing Baghdad. It's becoming clearer by the sortie, however, that President Saddam was as ready as he could be. He had his forces well dug-in in Kuwait, his planes hidden in hardened shelters, and had enough time to make decoy Scud missile launchers and even "paint damage" on runways.

The stunning pictures, released by the Pentagon, of U.S. planes dropping precision bombs down the air shaft of the Defence Ministry in Baghdad and through the front door of a bomb shelter suggest such weapons have been used continuously in the allied sorties. That is not so.

The weapons are particularly susceptible to bad weather,

of which there has been a lot. Their infra-red sensors are interrupted by rain, fog and smoke.

Another myth concerns the high-tech Patriot missile. It is widely believed that it is launched by a crew on the ground. But that is not quite true. In his briefing on Tuesday, Lieutenant General Tom Kelly, Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs, said that the weapon's initial alarm system is set off by the flame of the launch of the incoming enemy missile, which is recorded 7,000 miles away in Colorado, by the U.S. Defence Support Programme from satellite information.

One of the oldest war myths of all, of course, is that all armies with months of prepara-

tion are 100 per cent ready for battle. Military leaders know this is not the case about 20 per cent of the time. That may be why Gen Powell, on the first day of the war, reckoned only 80 per cent of the air raids were "effective".

Finally, Pentagon officials love to say no one profits from war. Another myth. General Michael Dugan, the air force Chief of Staff who was fired last September for revealing the U.S. would bomb "down-town Baghdad", is now a consultant with CBS Television.

He is reported to receive \$1,500 a day, which means that after two months work he should start making more than he did in a year working for the Pentagon. The Independent.

U.S. troops encounter a land where it's bad to be a cat

From Richard Dowden in Hafar Al-Batin

Most American soldiers here give you the textbook answers: "We're here to do a job" ... "We're defending democracy and the American way of life" ... "We're here to liberate Kuwait." One sergeant went a bit over the top: "I joined up to go to war and kill."

But two young artillerymen I met by the petrol station yesterday reflected a different view. Their unit is part of the Big Red One, the 1st Infantry, a division which is usually based in Germany, and they resented being uprooted from their life of beer and ease in Augsburg.

The conversation with Joe and Marvin, which are not their real names, went like this:

Marvin: I don't believe in all this — what we're doing here. What has Saddam Hussein done to me? He's never threatened me.

Joe: I sent a letter home with "no blood for oil" written on the envelope. It was a kind of a joke, but they wouldn't accept it. I got called in and asked if I was some kind of a conscientious objector. Shit, I said it was just a joke. But he's right, I don't believe in this war either.

Marvin: I hate this country — the people here, they are rude and unfriendly. I'm not going to spill my guts for them.

Why did you join the army? Marvin: I don't remember. I just needed a job, I suppose. Yeah, I'll kill if I have to, I'll pull the trigger, yeah.

Joe: We're only here because our colonel wants to be a general.

Marvin has a mischievous grin and Joe is gaunt and smiling. They display a studied indifference to news of the war and even the weaponry around them. Marvin's main aim seems to be to take photos of Saudi women, which is strictly against orders. A car pulls up with a woman in the front seat, wrapped in black with only her eyes showing. Marvin whistles and waves.

Joe: Look out! Here comes her man. He'll stick that Arab knife in your guts. He'll kebab your ass.

Marvin: I hate this country. It sucks.

Both men are paid about \$1,000 (£515) a month, plus an extra \$110 a month for being here.

Joe: The King said he'd pay us an extra thousand bucks a month each for being here, but

Mr. Bush said no — we weren't mercenaries. Why are we here, then? And why are we getting an extra \$110 a month? Who's paying, that's what I ask?

Joe: Hey, look at that cat, it's eating bread. It must be real starving.

Marvin: Not a good place to be a cat, I hate this country. Joe: Come on, it's not so bad.

Marvin: Name one good thing about it.

Joe is silent and Marvin laughs. They complain about the lack of alcohol, the food, no showers and, above all, no women.

What about the women in the U.S. forces?

Joe: They're all bitches. All of 'em. I'm going to get so drunk on that plane home.

Hueeee! Marvin: I'm not. I've got something to do to my fiancée when I get back. Hate this country. I'll say it again.

From this conversation, I went to meet the local governor, the Emir, Hamed al-Jibril, in his palace, an old-fashioned building with high ceilings and small windows. In the courtyard a group of old men in jallabiyas and red and white keffiyehs were sitting on the ground, playing a game with stones on a pattern drawn in the sand. Each one was armed with a bolt-action Mauser rifle, which one local told me had been captured from the Turks when Lawrence of Arabia was here.

I waited in an outer room until I was ushered into the Emir's presence. There was a thick Persian carpet on the floor and sofas and cushions around the walls to accommodate the meetings of the elders. The Emir was sitting, writing, at a desk and flipped back the corners of his kofiyeh as I came in. He had a telephone, but no secretary. He was effortlessly courteous and attentive, summoning and dismissing his attendants with complete authority.

Because he could speak little English, he telephoned someone and we conducted the interview, passing the telephone back and forth. He was full of smiles and assurances that, in Hafar, all is well. A man came in with two little glasses and a kettle of sweet black tea and we sipped it together, smiling and nodding. Apart from the telephone, little had changed since Lawrence's time, and I'm not sure what Joe and Marvin would have made of it. — The Independent.

LETTERS

'Jack and the Beanstalk'

To the Editor:

The lines are now clearly drawn. The entire Western world and its allies in the East have come out of their holes, falling over each other in their haste to demonstrate their solidarity with the American ogre and its offspring, Israel.

Japan, forgetting the American nuclear atrocities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, cannot commit funds fast enough to the war efforts of President Bush. Germany, in the person of Foreign Minister Genscher and the leader of the opposition Vogel, is down on its knees begging Shamir for forgiveness and promising to punish German firms that helped Iraq develop its war machine and handing out cheques like there is no tomorrow. The European Community decided that the 700+ Palestinians killed during the intifada do not count as much as the few Israelis wounded by Scud attacks. France, Italy, Holland and even Argentina are deeply touched by the tremendous sacrifice Israel has made so far by not retaliating against the Iraqi attacks. Billions are now pouring into the Israeli treasury in gratitude.

The biggest farce of all, the United Nations, an organisation supposedly created to work for peace in the world, is not even willing to meet and explore possibilities of a ceasefire that may lead to a halt in the bloodshed on both sides of the battle front.

And the list goes on and on! At the outset of the conflict, there was a lot of talk about double standards. The events of the last few months clearly demonstrate that there are indeed no double standards. The law of the jungle has prevailed again and it is obvious that whatever America wants, America gets. The garbage that President Bush fed the world, including his fellow Americans, about liberating Kuwait stinks as garbage does when uncovered. True to the proverb about the tail wagging the dog, it is now crystal clear that the world has been drawn into what could develop into the bloodiest confrontation ever in order to fulfill the ambition of Israel of destroying the only serious Arab military might. And we all know why!

Ronald Reagan called on soothsayers for help. George Bush has Billy Graham by his side for divine inspiration. He would do much better in reading fairy tales, and I would recommend he starts with "Jack and the Beanstalk." Shamir and his lot should brush up on their Old Testament and the interesting story of "David and Goliath." The rest of the world leaders would do well in brushing up on the story of Samson in Temple.

Is there really any point in pretending anymore that reason will

prevail? Is there any reason anymore? Can the Palestinians hope still for a fair hearing from a world deaf to human suffering unless it is in Hebrew? Does the world really expect the Palestinians to sit and wait for the U.S. and West to decide on what is the "appropriate time and framework" for an international peace conference? Will the Palestinians at the end of the day prove to be as naive as the West takes them for?

To borrow from the Holy Book again, the only salvage for the Palestinians is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." They must realise now that their enemy is not only within the boundaries of the state of Israel. They must not be deterred by the Western definition of the word "terrorism." After all, the American and allied forces bombardment of civilians in Iraq does not fall under this heading, while the "atrocious" Iraqi bombardment of "innocent" Israelis is deemed as heinous crime against humanity. The rules have been changed; in fact the only rules that apply are the ones dictated by the interest of the USA and its allies, so called civilised world. We have always been told that we must learn from this civilised world, and my advice to the Palestinians is to do just that.

Claire de la Plume,
P. O. Box 96026,
Amman.

Correction

To the Editor:

Pursuant to articles written by Mr. P. V. Vivekanand one of your staff reporters, dated Jan. 24, 25 Jan. 1991, in which he claimed the denial of Sudanese evacuees transit by the Egyptian Government.

I would kindly like to make clear that Egypt did not deny transit visa for any nationality from the Port of Aqaba to Nueibeh, and that any delay which might have occurred was due only to the fact that the requested arrangements from the international organisations concerned were not yet finalised.

Accordingly and as a trusting reader of the Jordan Times, I always expect the correct information from your esteemed newspaper, and that the professional integrity and the conscience of a reporter, oblige him to check out the accurate information from the parties concerned before editing such an accusation.

Please, Sir, accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Press Counsellor of the Egyptian Embassy

We will stay

The following letter was sent by a group of Italian ladies who have chosen to remain in Jordan, to political and religious leaders as well as to the press and public opinion.

We are Italian ladies living in Jordan, married to Jordanian citizens. Having lived for many years in this country, we understand the problems and difficulties facing this people. Because of that and the fact that we are attached to this country through family bonds, we feel it is a duty to express an opinion about the gravity and absurdity of this destructive conflict which, notwithstanding the opposition of the major part of world public opinion, has broken out in the Middle East.

We all acknowledge that it could have been avoided and that a just and peaceful solution to all problems in the Middle East has not been sought in depth. In fact, the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, taking into consideration all the various problems of the area, has never been securely guaranteed.

International organisations, which should protect and safeguard the rights and peaceful co-existence between peoples, have been incapable of applying one single measure of justice applicable to all.

These international organisations, which should guarantee peace, have in reality, had to or have been obliged to take a decision to go to war. Unfortunately, very specific economic interests have prevailed.

We find ourselves again facing the arrogant logic of Colonialism. The decision on the part of the Italian government to participate in the war has left us deeply deluded.

We find it our duty to repeat our disapproval and condemnation. Finally, we wish to express our appreciation at the untiring efforts on the part of His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan to avoid this destructive conflict, for which Jordan has paid and continues to pay a high price.

Signed by the representatives,
Poala Segat Kheir,
Anna Dabbagh,
Maria Saudi,
Narcella Zunini Hindawi,
Amman.

مكتبة الناص

Anti-war movement in U.S. — all colours and ideologies

From Rania Atalla
in Washington D.C.

TENS OF thousands of protesters marched to the White House Saturday to protest against the war in the Gulf. But George Bush was apparently not at home to hear them.

It was the largest anti-war rally in Washington since the beginning of the U.S.-led war against Iraq Jan. 17. It was also most diverse in composition, grouping individuals with an array of political and social views, from anarchists, totally opposed to any form of government, to religious groups who look to moral authority to end human suffering.

The rather up-beat rally, organised by the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, drew from across the country, human rights activists, labour unions, students, church groups, gay and rights advocates, war veterans, environmentalists and even organic farmers. It differed from a smaller, somewhat less diverse demonstration which took place last week and which was "angrier in tone," organised by the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East.

The "leftist" and "more militant" elements, which seemed to dominate last week's protests, were to some extent marginalised and perhaps overshadowed Saturday by the "liberals" that showed up in the capital Saturday, such as environmentalists, religious groups and even a small number of Republicans opposed to the war. Literature sold during last week's protest included "The Militant" of the Socialist Workers Party as well as publications of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

The fact that this week's and last week's protests were organised by two different groups led a Washington Post writer to conclude that the "left-of-center" element of the anti-war movement in the U.S. suffers from "sectarian infighting." While both groups have called for an immediate end to the war in the Gulf and a withdrawal of U.S. troops from the area, the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East has declined to condemn Iraq's invasion of

Kuwait and considers the U.N. sanctions against Iraq as punishment to innocent Iraqi mothers and children.

The National Campaign for Peace has taken no position on sanctions but believes the embargo should exclude food and medicine. Both groups would like to see funds spent on housing and social services in the U.S. "Healthcare, not warfare," was a slogan raised at both rallies. The Coalition would also like to see the issues of racism and statehood for the District of Columbia addressed here in the U.S.

Washington Post writers have suggested that while the National Campaign for Peace has tended to draw more religious, pacifist and student groups, the Coalition has attracted "tougher-talking advocates of radical causes," including, according to the Post, revolutionary socialism and Palestinian nationalism. A survey conducted by the Washington Post during Saturday's rally suggested that the typical demonstrator was "a politically liberal, college-educated man or woman in their twenties or early thirties."

Labels and categorisation aside, a considerable number of those who marched in Saturday's rally demonstrated support for the Palestinian people. Many white Americans waved the Palestinian flag and called for "Justice in the Gulf and Palestine." Some even demanded an international peace conference to settle the Middle East conflict.

But although the number of participants in Saturday's protesters was impressive — police estimate them at 75,000 while rally organisers and independent observers put the number at 300,000 — and while their presence could not be ignored during the three-hour march from Capitol Hill to the White House, there are those who remain sceptical as to what the anti-war protests would achieve and the influence they would have on public opinion. A nation-wide Washington Post-ABC poll last week indicated that 75 per cent of the American public approved of U.S. policy and only 23 per cent disapproved. Whether this week's protests will have an impact on decision-makers is still open to

debate. But what is certain is that Saturday's rally comes as an important test for the momentum of the anti-war movement in the U.S. Already, some elements of American society have begun to refer to the anti-war protesters as "a bunch of hippies left over from the 1960s with nothing to do."

Among the first accusations made against anti-war activists was their lack of patriotism. Supporters of Mr. Bush's war policy have argued that the anti-war protests in the U.S. would only serve to demoralise troops on duty in the Gulf. Anti-war activists were therefore quick to point out during this week's march that they are indeed supportive of the troops in the Gulf and wanted to "bring them home... ALIVE," rather than in body bags. "Peace is patriotic," asserted many of the hand-made signs on Saturday.

Some observers believe the anti-war movement is sure to lose some of its support in the event of Iraq deciding to use chemical weapons in its war against allied forces. "If Iraq gasses Israel, say good bye to the anti-war movement here," said one Bush supporter who happened to be of Jewish descent.

The diversity in Saturday's rally could be seen in the signs paraded as protesters marched in the streets of Washington sealed-off for the occasion. The slogans ranged from the polite and apologetic such as "Please stop the war," to the rude and uninhibited sentence with four letter words. Some slogans were emotional and rhetorical — "Imperialist forces out of the Middle East and Latin America" — while others were more academic: "Saddam is just a symptom." Some echoed the voice of religious authority quoting Pope John Paul II's statement "The Gulf attack is a great defeat for the world," and the Bible commandment "Thou Shall not Kill." Others — most notably the environmental group "Greenpeace" — focused on more mundane issues, demanding an end to the war in order to "save the planet." Some protesters reflected sarcasm and cynicism at Mr. Bush and the U.S. administration's foreign policy: "War is the solution of the brain dead," one sign

read while another asked: "What if Kuwait's main export was broccoli (instead of oil)," a reference to Mr. Bush's strong dislike of the green vegetable.

Other groups found Saturday's protest a good opportunity to voice their own complaints and demand justice for their cause, among them Cypriots asking for the implementation of U.N. resolutions on the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus and Pakistanis demanding self-determination for people in Kashmir. For its part, the National Writers Union demanded an end to "Pentagon censorship" of the media.

Vastly outnumbered in Saturday's protest was a group of Bush supporters who cheered "USA, USA... 86 per cent," in reference to poll estimates of American public support for Mr. Bush.

Speakers at Saturday's rally included Shadow Senator for the District of Columbia Jesse Jackson and President of the National Organisation for Women Molly Yard.

Waving a tiny American flag in her hand, one protester, Sarah Cutler, booed Bush supporters and despite her strong patriotism, expressed an equally strong disapproval of the war against Iraq. "What got us in trouble was a bad policy. Bush has no right to decide what is right and what is not in the Middle East," she said, adding that the Gulf war could have easily been avoided had the "Arab solution" been given a chance to be formulated and had sanctions been given time to prove their effectiveness. Ms. Cutler disapproved of Mr. Bush's use of the U.N. as a forum for U.S. policy and stressed that over U.N. resolutions — most notably those on the Palestinians — should be implemented.

Karl Jadrnick, who had flown into Washington all the way from Hawaii for the protest, said the principle of self-determination has been overshadowed by "superpower determination" which he saw as "a bad first step to the new world order." Mr. Jadrnick disapproved of U.S. intervention in the region because "the oil belongs to the people of the region." It is up to the Iraqi people, he said, to decide who governs them.

Czechoslovak arms industry boosted by Gulf war

By Steve Kettle
Reuter

PRAGUE — Czechoslovakia's once massive arms industry, officially being run down, could be boosted by the Gulf war.

One week before the war broke out, Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier returned from a tour of Gulf states and said many were keenly interested in buying Czechoslovak weapons and vehicles such as armoured personnel carriers.

"Also, the entire region is interested in the kind of equipment our military unit in Saudi Arabia has," he added.

While in the Gulf, Dienstbier visited the anti-chemical warfare unit that Czechoslovakia sent to Saudi Arabia in December as its contribution to the international forces ranged against Iraq. It is not a fighting unit but the 185 soldiers are specialists in combating chemical weapons and their effects.

Until the fall of communism in late 1989, Czechoslovakia had a comprehensive arms industry, unrivalled for a country of its size and involving 111 factories.

It built a huge range of light and heavy weapons and equipped much of the Warsaw Pact's forces.

Czechoslovak-made arms include: Soviet-designed T-72 tanks, BVP1 and BVP2 armoured personnel carriers, Dolphin trainer jets, and Turbulet L160 small planes. The firm that produces the AK47 automatic rifle also makes "Type Eight" sub-machine-guns, grenades, rapid-fire rifles, explosives and pistols.

Libya, Iraq and Syria were among major customers for an industry that employs 100,000 people and had an annual turnover of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Precise figures of the extent of the arms trade are hard to come by. The Omnipol Foreign Trade Company responsible for most arms sales is tight-lipped but the Stockholm-based research institute Sipri estimated Czechoslovakia's foreign arms sales at \$287 million in 1989, the last year of communist rule.

Some lethal products fell into the wrong hands. Semtex, an industrial explosive, was believed to have been used to blow up a Pan Am Jumbo jet over Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people.

Visiting Britain last year, President Vaclav Havel said enough Semtex to keep the

world's terrorists supplied for 150 years had been sold to Libya and other countries until exports were halted in the 1980s.

As soon as he came to power, Havel insisted that Czechoslovakia's role as a major world arms producer must stop. A winding-down process, to be completed in 1993, would cut arms production to 25 per cent of its 1988 level.

But weapons exports still fetch much-needed foreign currency and the social and economic problems of switching factory production from arms to other goods are considerable.

Jan Carnogursky, deputy prime minister of Slovakia where most heavy arms plants are located, announced in early January that conversion of arms factories would be slowed down to avoid threatening tens of thousands of jobs in related industries.

Slovak Economics Minister Jozef Belcak said abandoning arms manufacture worth around 10 billion crowns (\$370 million) would directly endanger 9,000 jobs in the region and affect a further 60,000 others in related industries.

But at the same time, Czechoslovakia is committed to scrapping 1,600 tanks, more than 2,300 other armoured vehi-

cles and 24 warplanes under the terms of the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) signed in November.

Commentators pointed to a ludicrous but possible scenario in which tanks would be destroyed in Bohemia and Moravia to comply with the CFE treaty while new tanks were still being built in Slovakia to avoid unemployment.

Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Jiri Brabec said Czechoslovakia has sold "less than half" of the weapons it must get rid of under the CFE treaty. The rest will have to be sold, or destroyed.

"Czechoslovakia is interested in penetrating the Gulf market," Foreign Trade Minister Spokesman Jindrich Lacko said. As well as personnel carriers, guns and ammunition, "we hope to sell some tanks to the area."

Havel's economics adviser Richard Wagner said Saudi Arabia in particular was interested in buying Czechoslovak arms. But sales must be controlled.

"In accordance with our policy, we do not want to sell offensive weapons but do not exclude negotiations on deliveries of defensive weaponry or standard infantry weapons and other military supplies," Wagner said.

Gorbachev pushed into a trap

By Bryan Brumley
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Six years after taking power, Mikhail Gorbachev has lost sway with reformers and fallen under the control of military and Communist Party hard-liners, say well-placed Soviet sources.

Many Western diplomats in Moscow also believe Gorbachev has become a political hostage to what amounts to a creeping coup.

The hard-liners have ordered attacks in the Baltic republics "to bloody Gorbachev's shirt" and force him to take even harsher measures, said one Soviet official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Defence Minister Dmitri Yezov and Interior Minister Boris Pugo, a former KGB general, have increased the pressure with a decree authorising joint military and police patrols throughout the President Gorbachev altogether, was signed on Dec. 29 but not disclosed until Friday night.

Yuri Luzhkov, a leader of the reformist Moscow city government, called the decree "very

dangerous for society and for democracy."

Many prominent reformers have quit the government to protest what outgoing Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze described as an approaching dictatorship being forced on Gorbachev.

But on veteran diplomat in Moscow contended that Gorbachev "is still responsible for government policy, whether he is making it or it is being forced on him."

That's the taken by many Western officials, who have suspended some aid to Moscow and warned that the crackdown may force postponement of the U.S.-Soviet summit scheduled for Moscow on Feb. 11-13.

Soviet reformers and their Western sympathisers still hope to win Gorbachev back to their cause.

A band of reformers remaining in the Kremlin, including Alexander Yakovlev, drafted a statement for Gorbachev warning shadowy, self-proclaimed national salvation committees to refrain from using the military to attack constitutionally elected govern-

ment bodies, as they did in the Baltics, a Soviet official said.

But the hard-liners, with the help of Gorbachev's Chief of Staff Valery Boldin, persuaded the Soviet president to expand his warning against violence to include the separatist movements that lead the Baltic republics, the source said.

Gorbachev, in his statement, denied any advance knowledge of individual military attacks in the Baltics and said "neither domestic nor foreign policy has changed."

But many reformers say Gorbachev has abandoned his efforts to move from a centrally planned to a market economy. And they say Gorbachev has allowed the military to violate the constitution by attacking elected Baltic governments and preparing its own street patrols without local consent.

Russian federation President Boris N. Yeltsin said last week that Gorbachev was bending to "violence and pressure" and had amassed so much power that "you can't speak about any democracy."

So far, Gorbachev has not

changed the foreign policy under which he and Shevardnadze helped end the cold war.

Gorbachev replaced Shevardnadze with Alexander Bessmertnykh, a career diplomat with U.S. expertise, signaling continued Kremlin desire for warm East-West ties.

But hard-liners "would also be happy to see Moscow's relations with Washington take a turn for the worse," said a Soviet official.

One sign of such a challenge appeared Saturday, when a retired general questioned a key plank in Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy, the credo of "reasonable sufficiency" that says armies are needed only for defence and not to wage war beyond national borders.

"You have to be blind and deaf not to notice that around the territory of the Soviet Union on all perimeters of the border a huge number of foreign military bases and installations have been created, and close to our southern border the fire of war is burning, namely 'desert storm,'" wrote Retired Maj. Gen. I. Vorobyov, in an article printed on the front page of the Soviet Defence Ministry newspaper, Krasnaya Zvezda.

Israel

(Continued from page 1)

Emergency measures adopted Sunday forbid employers from firing workers absent from jobs due to the attacks.

Parents have had to stay at home with their children since the country cancelled all schools on Jan. 16 in anticipation of an attack on Israel.

The three upper grades of secondary schools returned to classes on Sunday.

U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said Sunday production of Patriot missiles has been stepped up.

Asked if there were enough Patriots to hit all the Scuds that could be fired from Iraq, Mr.

Cheney said he believed so, adding that allied air attacks were also being aimed at the Scud launchers.

He said it did not matter how many more Scuds Iraq had in its arsenal if it didn't have the launchers for them.

Mr. Cheney did not say how many launchers have been destroyed and how many more Iraq was believed to have left.

During Sunday's cabinet session, Israeli ministers called for the arrest of Faisal Al Hussein, the most senior Palestinian nationalist in the occupied territories, accusing him of praising the Iraqi attacks on Israel.

"There's no question what we are talking about is a war and anyone who harms the war effort... must be punished," said

Religious Affairs Minister Avner Shalev.

Three right-wing ministers demanded punishment that could include expulsion, but criticism ranged across the political spectrum.

The attacks were aimed at Mr. Hussein, 50, and the aged Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Saadeddin Al Alami, who was quoted as calling for a holy war against U.S. interests.

Mr. Hussein, widely seen as a delegate if Israeli-Palestinian negotiations ever begin, was quoted in an Italian magazine as saying Iraq's missile attacks were a "blessed thing" because they demonstrated Israeli security did not depend on holding the occupied territory.

"All of my statements are clear," Mr. Hussein told Reuters. "I have been against the war from the beginning because I know the result of war is ugly."

"I am not happy about bombing Tel Aviv or Baghdad or any city," he said.

Palestinians throughout the occupied territories remained under a curfew imposed as soon as the Gulf war began Jan. 17. It is lifted only for a few hours a couple of times a week to allow food shopping.

Israel suspended its policy of expelling Palestinians in 1989 after international criticism. Western countries, including the United States, say it violates the Geneva convention on the treatment of civilians in occupied territories.

Oil slick

(Continued from page 1)

why the manifolds were attacked, the general said:

"If you want to stop the oil — and the threat was the oil inside the larger storage tanks — all of that oil must flow through the manifolds, therefore, if you destroy the manifolds, you interrupt the ability of that oil to flow through those manifolds and out to the sea."

U.S. military officials said earlier that the Iraqis turned on pumps at the Kuwaiti offshore oil

loading facility last week and fed the spill with five idle tankers holding three million barrels of crude — about 125 million gallons (475 million litres).

Ibrahim Al Muhanna, an adviser to the Saudi oil minister, said Saturday the vast blanket of oil continued to grow and officials feared widespread devastation to marine life along the Gulf.

"It is the biggest ever in the history of the world and the only known deliberate oil spill," Mr. Muhanna said.

The previous record was 1.2 million barrels (176 million gallons or 669 million litres) in

the 1979 Ixtoc oil well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico.

In another indication of a feared environmental disaster, black rain fell on the southern Iranian island of Kharg Sunday morning, a consequence of oil well explosions and fires in the Gulf, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said.

IRNA said two other southern provinces, including Bushehr and Fars, had also been hit by sooty rain and if the phenomenon continued, drinking water sources could be contaminated.

U.S. President George Bush Friday accused Iraqi President

Saddam Hussein of "environmental terrorism" for allegedly ordering the oil spill. Earlier in the week, the U.S. military said Iraq had set oil installations on fire near Kuwait's border with Saudi Arabia.

Commodore Ken Summers, commander of Canada's forces in the Gulf, estimated the spill contained eight million barrels.

Mr. Muhanna acknowledged that television footage shown around the world Friday of a slick washing up on Saudi shores was probably from another spill. "This is wartime," he said. "Things are confusing."

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Jordan Times

EC ministers try to hold steady economic course during Gulf war

BRUSSELS (R) — European Community (EC) finance ministers will try to hold steady towards economic integration Monday amid stormy seas of the Gulf war, German unification and appeals for money from inside and outside the bloc.

The Gulf war will not have a formal place on the agenda of the first meeting of EC treasury chiefs this year.

And British officials say they do not expect Chancellor Norman Lamont to ask for money to help the war effort, though Britain does want its European allies to chip in more.

But the Gulf conflict will loom in the background when the ministers hold a three-hour debate on the state of economic policy in the 12 member states.

The ministers are expected to reaffirm the need to keep tight control over money supply

growth to try to reduce average EC inflation from the rate of 5.7 per cent achieved in 1990.

"Growing divergences between Community countries, the uncertainties associated with the Gulf crisis and the fragility of exchange and financial markets suggest there are considerable risks for the near term," says a background paper drawn up for the ministers' debate by the EC Commission.

EC commissioner for economic affairs, Henning Christophersen, will describe how the economic performances of EC member states are starting to drift apart just when they need to converge in preparation for economic and monetary union (EMU).

He is expected to point to a mounting budget deficit in Germany as keeping interest rates too high throughout Europe, and to call for Bonn to act if this

means tax increases.

"It is essential that (German) action is not delayed. While it is appropriate to aim primarily at cutting public expenditure, efforts to raise revenue may also be required," the commission paper says.

EC officials expect Bundesbank President Karl Otto Poehl, representing EC central bankers, to support this message.

But Germany will not be the only member state in the dock. Italy, Portugal, Spain and Britain are expected to be singled out for their economic problems.

And Greece will be castigated for having highest inflation rate and budget deficit in the EC, though criticism for Athens may be lessened by a pledge that the EC will loan up to \$3 billion to Greece if details can be worked out.

Ministers will also have to

grapple with growing appeals for money from the struggling countries of eastern Europe.

A plan to extend EC development leading to Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria is stalled by EC lending as well.

Ministers will hear a report on efforts to raise \$1 billion for a separate loan to Czechoslovakia, and they will be told that Hungary has asked for \$700 million more.

At mid-afternoon, the 12 ministers will change hats for a meeting of the inter-governmental conference (IGC) charged with negotiating the treaty terms of a future monetary union.

Luxembourg, current holder of the EC presidency, has signalled that the IGC will not confront Monday such emotional issues as Britain's refusal to accept the goal of a single currency.

OPEC president blames IEA for depressing world oil prices

ALGIERS (R) — OPEC President Sadek Boussena accused the IEA, the world energy watchdog, of helping to engineer a fall in world oil prices at the start of the Gulf war and expressed concern there could be a future market glut.

Boussena, the Algerian mines and industry minister, said in an interview with the official APS news agency that the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) had caused the fall by

releasing stocks to the market. Boussena was sharply critical of an IEA announcement on Jan. 17, the day the Gulf war started, that it would release 2.5 million barrels per day (b/d) of crude stocks to ensure supply.

"It has to be said that the IEA, which had until then refused to take any step to stabilise the market, resolutely took this action from the perspective of war," he said.

Traders recalled that world oil

prices soared to more than \$40 a barrel in the weeks before the war because of fears that conflict would disrupt oil supplies from the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia led moves by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to make up a shortfall to world oil markets of up to four million b/d of OPEC crude lost because of United Nations sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait crude.

But Boussena said the IEA and countries controlling information that could determine the state of the market had worked together to push down the oil price as part of preparations for the Gulf war.

"Notification (of release of stocks) by the agency to its members on Jan. 17, the day the war started, to make 2.5 million b/d available, was, when combined with the euphoria about the duration of the war on the first day, effectively an announcement that an oil glut could be expected," he said.

European prices registered their single biggest one-day fall on the first day of the war when traders did their sums and reckoned Saudi oil would not be hit and supply was ample.

Prices seem to have settled around \$20 a barrel and analysts believe they will probably stay there for the time being. They

closed in London Friday at \$20.30.

OPEC's official target price is \$23 a barrel, although some OPEC members, including Algeria, Iran and Iraq, favour tighter control over output and higher prices.

Boussena voiced concern that prices could fall further once the war is over, echoing fears among other OPEC states that current output is building a new oil glut for the future.

"We are extremely worried about the medium term, because after the war, we could find ourselves in an even worse situation," he said.

"Low prices are, of course, not in the interest of consumers. Consumers and producers need stability and some predictability of how prices will move in the medium term. Under \$25, that is not guaranteed," he said.

OPEC has long argued that producing and consuming nations should cooperate on world energy output, supply and prices, it has called for an "energy dialogue" with the West.

This is rejected by countries such as the United States, which fears dependency on Middle East suppliers, mindful of the oil price hikes over the last 20 years which plunged the world into economic recession.

Gulf war exacerbates economic and financial dilemma in U.S.

NEW YORK (R) — The United States economy, already grappling with a troubled banking system and waning consumer confidence, must now also pay the immense cost of waging war in the Gulf.

The Federal Reserve (Fed), the U.S. central bank, has put most of its energy into battling recession by lowering interest rates in a bid to induce bank lending, so consumers can spend more and breathe life into the economy.

But analysts say the war and recession, which could both cost jobs, have eroded consumer confidence and encouraged saving.

"The Fed finds itself frustrated that it has been directly targeting interest rates and it has had little effect on new lending, economic growth or money creation," said Brian Fabbri, an economist at

Midland Montagu.

Consumers and businesses, emerging from the borrow-and-spend 1980s, are more indebted than ever. They are reluctant to borrow in a recession, and banks do not want to lead with so many loans failing.

And those Americans who do have money are spending less.

Since July, the Fed has pushed the key federal funds rate 1.5 percentage points lower to 6.75 per cent. But the lower rate, charged on overnight loans between commercial banks, has not revived lending.

The central bank has also cut the discount rate it charges banks for loans to 6.5 per cent from seven per cent. That hasn't worked either.

The reason the Fed has had little success is that the problems are so deep, said Ray Stone, an economist and partner at Prince-

ton, N.J.-based Stone McCarthy Research Associates.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait triggered a surge in oil prices that accelerated the economy's descent into recession.

In the ensuing months, the Gulf crisis and the eventual outbreak of war helped batter consumer confidence and left banks — the linchpin of economic health — even more reluctant to lead than they were before the invasion.

"Regrettably, there's no end in sight," said one economist.

The collapse in real estate prices and the default of many mortgage loans is another problem — perhaps the biggest for banks, economists said.

And all this comes as money centre banks try to juggle massive non-performing loans to the Third World, a problem that has festered for nine years.

So now economists say the Fed is about to change direction to try to get banks to lend again. It has hinted as much in recent weeks by talking about sluggish growth in money supply.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said recently: "Our most recent action (to lower rates) was triggered, in large part, by further evidence of weak money growth."

Money supply — a buzzword from the 1970s — was largely ignored as irrelevant in the past decade. Now it's back.

"Six months ago they did not speak as much in terms of monetary growth. They talked about inflation and budget deficits," said Fabbri of Midland Montagu.

And while the Fed will continue to ease interest rates, it will complement the cuts with new, more liberal accounting rules to treat problem loans, analysts say.

Figures show Soviet economy worsening

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet government has reported the worst annual economic figures since World War II, saying gross national product (GNP) fell two per cent in 1990.

The report of the state statistics committee Goskomstat, summarised by TASS news agency, painted an almost unrelieved picture of decline five years after President Mikhail Gorbachev launched his perestroika reforms.

National income, the Kremlin's main measure of economic performance, fell even further than GNP, by four per cent, and labour productivity by three per

cent. The trade deficit shot up to \$10 billion roubles (\$18 billion) in 1990 from \$4 billion (\$6 billion) in 1989, and overall volume shrank by seven per cent to 131 billion roubles (\$235 billion).

Eveo population growth at 1.4 million was the smallest annual rise since the war, bringing the total to 290.1 million.

The report, "The Economy of the USSR in 1990," said this figure had been affected by a falling birth rate, a rising death rate and record emigration of some 400,000 people.

The gloomy figures came after

decades in which official statistics showed steady, if sometimes modest, growth in all main indicators. GNP had risen by three per cent in 1989.

Radical Soviet economists say Goskomstat statistics sometimes give an excessively positive picture of the economy.

But TASS began its report: "It seems that rose-tinted summaries of statistics about the socio-economic development of the country are a thing of the past."

The report was issued amid dire warnings of impending catastrophe from Gorbachev's former advisers as consumers, already fed up with empty food-shop shelves, reeled from his shock decree removing 50 and 100-rouble notes from circulation.

Conservatives who have won Gorbachev's ear over the past few weeks have put the brakes on his plans to transform the Soviet economy from a command system to a controlled market.

But radical and liberal economists say only an all-out, if painful,

drive to free enterprise can save the economy.

Stanislav Shatalin, who was Gorbachev's top economic adviser for almost a year, has said that the new government was doing nothing to stop fast-approaching disaster and its forecasts for 1991 were fanciful.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin, a former liberal now apparently disillusioned about the prospects for reform, told TASS in an interview that the Soviet population was not ready for a market system.

"People's mentality is based on myths," he said, "people expect a miracle from the market, or at least an extremely rapid improvement of the situation."

One bright spot was the government deficit, which fell 23 billion roubles (\$4 billion) to \$8 billion (\$104 billion) in 1990.

This was due to reduced central bank capital investment and defence spending and increased income from sales and income tax, the report said.

Iraq scores direct hit on Gulf economies

BAHRAIN (R) — Iraq has scored a direct hit on Gulf economies, shattering confidence in banks and ruining businesses recovering from the eight-year Iran-Iraq war.

Bankers and businessmen told Reuters Sunday that investment and spending were at a virtual standstill.

Foreign banks refuse to commit fresh money and staff to the area and even Gulf commercial and central banks are wary.

International bankers, gold dealers in the souks and used car salesmen are equally hard-hit by the economic fallout caused by the Gulf war between Iraq and the Arab-Western coalition.

"Bahrain has been particularly badly ... (hit) because it is an offshore banking centre ... and it is close to the action," said one senior banker. "Business is as dead as a dodo."

Down the road in the souk, gold jeweller Hussein Al Tahoo laments the damage Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has done to his business. He has closed one of two workshops.

"Every day I open the shop and read the paper and close the shop again. It's very boring," he said. "Most of the people are buying food. They don't think to buy gold."

Across town used car salesman Raju Aravind hasn't sold a car for almost two weeks.

"This is only because of the war," he said to a well-stocked showroom. "Everybody is frightened. They don't want to pay 3,500 dinars (\$9,000) for a car and then have Saddam Hussein come and take it. They saw what happened in Kuwait."

Bankers tell a similar story. "The sight of destitute Kuwaiti refugees who are rich on paper but in Kuwaiti land and savings has really shaken them up," said a European banker. "They just want to put their money under a nice safe mountain."

Gulf governments know the strain their economies are under. This is particularly so in Bahrain which lacks the vast oil revenue of its Gulf neighbours.

But they argue the price is worth it if pushing Iraq out of Kuwait brings long-term stability. They also point out the vast sums that will flow into the area for war reconstruction.

"Every country in the Gulf is paying a huge price for this war but we think it is a good investment for the future," a senior

Bahrain government official said. "Whatever the cost it is worth it for the long-term stability and economic prosperity," he said.

Visionary Gulf politicians see a bright economic future for the Gulf states. A wave of capitalism which will need experienced banking centres like Bahrain to direct it.

As well as political reform in the Gulf states, or even before it, some Gulf leaders see economic reform as an early benefit from the Gulf war.

"We've seen it work in eastern Europe and western Europe," said one Bahraini official who declined to be named. "We don't have to re-invent the wheel here. We have seen the importance of allowing the free movement of capital. The future must be that way, not through grants and wasted investment."

But will the banks still be here? "Banking is all about confidence and if you haven't got confidence you don't have a banking system," one banker said.

Most Japanese banks in Bahrain have all but shut down. Many other banks which took advantage of Bahraini incentives to establish offshore banking units (OBU) mothballed branches.

Dust-covered sportscars and limousines in bank car parks attest to the flight of their owners ahead of the Gulf war.

Tens of billions of dollars flowed out of the Gulf and back to Western and Japanese dealing rooms immediately after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August.

The Bahrain Monetary Agency (BMA) says the assets of offshore banks fell from 71.2 billion in July to \$57.8 billion in September 1990 following Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

The number of banks has officially fallen to 53 from 56 over a similar period but many others are in limbo.

In 1985 — as the Iran-Iraq war across the Gulf — Bahrain had 75 offshore banks managing more than \$60 billion.

Further down the Gulf in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) the problem is the same and has hit retail commercial banks.

"Expatriates have transferred money to safe havens," said Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank managing director, Sultan Nasser Al Suwaidi. "They are keeping a minimum amount of money here."

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LONDON	01:25 p.m.	07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m.	07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m.	07:45 p.m.

TUESDAY 29/1/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

	Depart	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m.	02:00 p.m.
PARIS	11:00 a.m.	04:50 p.m.
LONDON	11:00 a.m.	05:40 p.m.
LARNACA	05:00 p.m.	06:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

	Depart	Arrival
LARNACA	08:00 a.m.	09:30 a.m.
VIENNA	09:00 a.m.	03:30 p.m.
ROME	10:45 a.m.	03:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 30/1/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

	Depart	Arrival
VIENNA	09:30 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
NEW YORK	09:30 a.m.	08:00 p.m.
AMSTERDAM	09:30 a.m.	05:00 p.m.
VIENNA	11:00 a.m.	02:00 p.m.
CAIRO	09:00 p.m.	11:15 p.m.
TUNIS	09:00 p.m.	01:30 a.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

	Depart	Arrival
LARNACA	08:30 a.m.	08:00 a.m.
LARNACA	08:00 a.m.	06:45 p.m.
LONDON	09:25 a.m.	07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m.	07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m.	07:45 p.m.

THURSDAY 31/1/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

	Depart	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m.	02:00 p.m.
PARIS	11:00 a.m.	04:50 p.m.
LONDON	11:00 a.m.	05:40 p.m.
LARNACA	08:00 p.m.	09:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

	Depart	Arrival
NEW YORK	08:00 p.m.	06:45 p.m.
AMSTERDAM	11:00 p.m.	06:45 p.m.
VIENNA	02:00 p.m.	06:45 p.m.
TUNIS	02:30 a.m.	08:30 a.m.
CAIRO	06:30 a.m.	08:30 a.m.

FRIDAY 1/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

	Depart	Arrival
CAIRO	11:00 a.m.	01:15 p.m.
LARNACA	08:00 p.m.	07:30 p.m.
LARNACA	09:00 p.m.	10:30 p.m.

Arriving flight to Amman from:

	Depart	Arrival
LARNACA	08:00 a.m.	09:30 a.m.
CAIRO	02:00 p.m.	04:00 p.m.
LONDON	08:25 a.m.	07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m.	07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m.	07:45 p.m.

SATURDAY 2/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

	Depart	Arrival
VIENNA	09:30 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
AMSTERDAM	09:30 a.m.	05:00 p.m.
NEW YORK	08:30 a.m.	07:00 p.m.
VIENNA	11:00 a.m.	02:00 p.m.
FRANKFURT	11:00 a.m.	04:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

	Depart	Arrival
LARNACA	08:30 a.m.	08:00 a.m.
LARNACA	08:00 a.m.	09:30 a.m.

Royal Jordanian would like to draw the attention of the passengers that all reconfirmation of reservations must be performed in-person together with their travel documents at the RJ office in Amman, 24 hours prior to the day of departure. Royal Jordanian would also like to inform all passengers that the timings of all departures or arrivals are subject to change without prior notice due to the prevailing circumstances.

Therefore kindly contact RJ reservation office at 678321 for further clarifications.

All passengers must report at Queen Alia International Airport THREE hours prior to the scheduled departure. Thank you.

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Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
Tom Cruise in **LOSIN' IT**
Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 677420
CONCORD
LAMBADA
Performances: 3:30, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
TOTAL RECALL
Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30

Cinema Tel: 675571
NIJOUR
TOTAL RECALL
Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema Tel: 699238
PLAZA
Adel Imam in **TIT FOR TAT**
Performances: 12:00, 3:00, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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- Basic functions: Cleaning, Receiving phone calls, Coming of age, Be able to read & write, Experience in similar works.
- Requirements: In case of not being Jordanian, "Resident Permit" should be valid, Interview in Chancery, According to functions, around JD 360, Jordanian Labour Law
- Salary:
- Applied Law:
- Presentation of applications: P.O. Box 454 — Amman, Tel. 622140, 624187. For fifteen days from the date of today, Curriculum vitae or biodata, Two pictures, Photocopy of Identity Card.

Enclose:

Soviet army captain wounds Lithuanian at military checkpoint

Vilnius officials keep record of army brutality

VILNIUS, USSR (Agencies) — A Soviet army captain wounded a Lithuanian worker at a military checkpoint Sunday, and Lithuanian officials have started keeping a record of brutality inflicted on citizens of the secessionist republic, a government spokesman said.

Government spokesman Audrius Azubalis said a Soviet patrol had stopped the worker who was driving a car with two young hitchhikers about 1 a.m. (2300 GMT). The worker was asked to leave the car and put his hands on the windshield.

A shot fired by the army captain at the ground, apparently as a warning, ricocheted and struck the worker's leg. The Lithuanian, identified as A. Skalingas, was being treated at a Vilnius hospital.

Azubalis also said that the last of six Lithuanians seized after a shooting incident involving paratroopers Thursday was released and hospitalised with a concussion.

The Lithuanian Health Ministry reported a similar case Saturday in the city of Kaunas, 100 kilometres west of Vilnius, where a man detained on Jan. 24 by the military was released and hospitalised with a concussion and chest, Azubalis said.

The commander of the Soviet army garrison had warned Saturday that his troops were becoming "more and more out of control."

Troops have been patrolling major cities in Lithuania and the highways that connect them ever since a weekend of violence two weeks ago claimed 14 lives and

injured more than 500 people. Azubalis said that the Interior Ministry and other departments of the republic's government are keeping a full record of the Soviet brutality.

He said that the Lithuanian government also had agreed with representatives of the Soviet prosecutor's office to work on a joint investigation of all the incidents.

In another development, former Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene telephoned the Lithuanian News Agency ELTA to deny a report that she had fled the country and asked for political asylum in Switzerland.

An angry Mrs. Prunskiene called the reports "disinformation" and said that "such a thought had never even reached" her mind. She said that she was in Germany to seek aid for an organisation called "Tarka Lietuva" or "Support Lithuania."

Mrs. Prunskiene resigned earlier this month over protests at how her government had handled sharp price increases that took effect Jan. 1.

The three-Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are seeking independence from the Soviet Union. Stalin forcibly incorporated the Baltic countries, which were independent between the two world wars, into the Soviet Union in 1940.

The Soviet leadership in Moscow has pressed the republics to retract their demands and with the help of the Soviet army is trying to reimpose Soviet control.

The Baltics all have freely elected parliaments and claim that the laws passed by their new democratic legislatures are valid.

Moscow tightens control

In a separate development, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has tightened central control over industry and public order, with directives for the military to patrol city streets and the KGB to scrutinise business activity.

In his latest decree issued Saturday, the Soviet leader empowered the KGB security police and the Interior Ministry to enter the premises of any business and carry out audits on their stocks, accounts or cash.

Authorities, the document said, will be entitled to "enter the premises of any enterprise or institution used for business purposes without hindrance."

"Like a decree issued four days earlier withdrawing from circulation all 500 and 100-rouble notes, the measure sought to attack the lucrative black market present in virtually all sectors of the consumer market and industry."

A ministerial order approved last month but made public only Friday authorised Soviet soldiers and sailors to patrol city streets jointly with police from next month — singling out demonstrations in particular.

The new orders reflected what many liberals have said is a lurch to the right in the past two months by Gorbachev, which includes increased reliance on the military to contain a growing

sense of disorder in the country. Reaction to the order on joint street patrols was fierce from radical city authorities and from the Baltic republics' governments bent on secession from the Soviet Union.

"We appeal to Muscovites, councils of other towns and the parliaments of the republics, so that this illegal and unconstitutional decision can be blocked by our joint action," Deputy Moscow Mayor Sergei Stankevich said.

"We must not allow ourselves under any circumstances to be used as a screen for dictatorship."

Other officials said the measure was a thinly-disguised attempt by central authorities to try to take control of law and order from local authorities.

"What happens if the council decides to permit some demonstration which does not perhaps please the authorities which signed this order?" Moscow chief executive Yuri Luzhkov said.

Only a handful of police were seen on the street during last Sunday's demonstration by the Kremlin walls attended by at least 100,000 people denouncing Moscow's policy in the Baltic republics. No one was injured.

Gorbachev's latest decree extended even further power to the KGB security forces, who are already in charge of distributing emergency food aid from the West. It applied to private and state enterprises, cooperatives and joint ventures, leaving out only diplomatic premises.

The KGB was authorised to check that consumer protection laws were being observed and to take samples for verification.

Coup bid fails in S. African homeland

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Soldiers in the Ciskei homeland foiled an attempted coup over the weekend, and a former member of the ruling military council was arrested in connection with it, the South African Press Association (SAPA) reported Sunday.

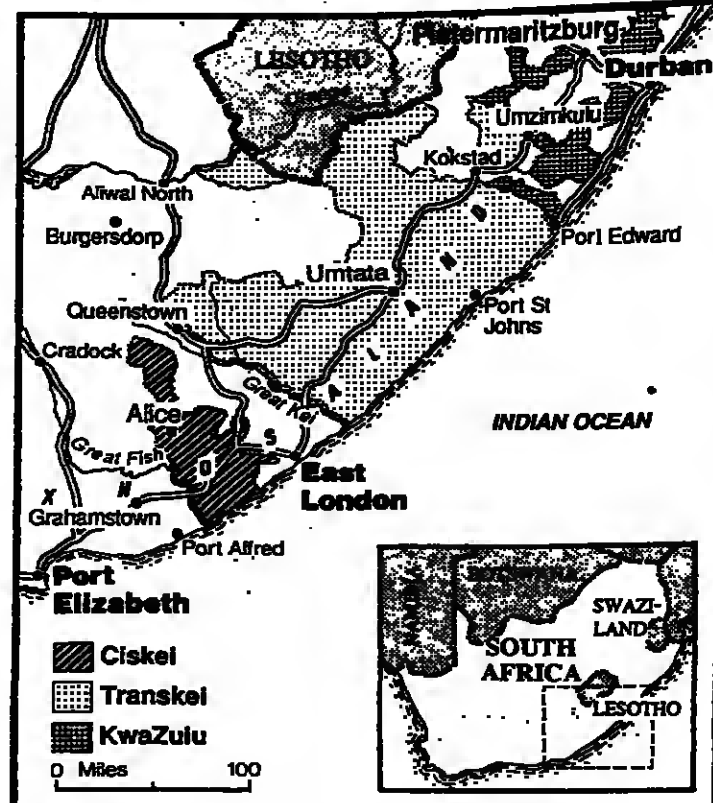
SAPA quoted a Ciskei government spokesman, Ian Dixon, as saying the attempted takeover occurred Saturday. On Saturday, authorities arrested Col. Mangwane Guzana, it quoted Ciskei leader Brig. Gen. Oupa Gqozo as saying.

Guzana was one of four leaders of a bloodless coup in March 1990 that ousted President Lennox Sebe and brought the military to power.

SAPA quoted Gqozo as saying rebels and members of the Ciskei military exchanged gunfire. The report gave no details on casualties. There was no answer at government or police offices in Ciskei.

Ciskei is one of four black homelands considered independent by the South African government, which created them in the 1960s in an attempt to establish separate states for blacks. No other country recognises the homelands as sovereign countries.

Gqozo came to power after the ouster of President Sebe, who led Ciskei to "independent" status in 1981. Celebrations after the coup turned to riots that killed at least 27 people.



Reconciliation depends on peace between ANC, Inkatha

DURBAN, South Africa (AP) — Reconciliation in South Africa depends on peace between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said Saturday.

Addressing a youth rally three days before a planned meeting with ANC Deputy President Nelson Mandela, Buthelezi said he hoped his first face-to-face talks with Mandela in decades would halt conflict between the rival black opposition groups.

"I am going there to ring the bells of victory of peace against war and revolution," he said. Mandela said Saturday the Tuesday meeting would produce no winners or losers. He said its purpose was to work for peace, not to bury accusations.

"Those who want peace will close the past and concentrate on the present and future," Mandela said.

The two leaders are old friends turned political rivals. They have spoken by telephone but have not met since Mandela's release from 27 years' imprisonment last February.

Haiti president-elect's party fails to win majority in parliament

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Legislators favourable to President-Elect Jean-Bertrand Aristide won the most seats in the National Assembly but not a majority, according to Jan. 20 runoff results released Saturday.

Results published by the Electoral Council show 13 senators out of 27 and 27 deputies out of 83 belong to the multi-party left National Front for Change and Democracy, which nominated Aristide in October.

No single party won the 56-seat majority which would enable it to

appoint the prime minister.

In first-round general elections on Dec. 16, Aristide won the presidency with 67 per cent of 1.6 million valid votes. The runner-up, former World Bank official Marc Bazin, won 14 per cent.

Aristide, who is the first freely elected president in 187 years of Haitian independence, is to be sworn in on Feb. 7, the fifth anniversary of the flight into exile of dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Six senators and 17 deputies belong to the three-party socialist centre-right National Alliance for

Democracy and Progress led by Bazin.

The president chooses the prime minister from among the members of the party having an absolute majority in the assembly. In the absence of a majority, he chooses the prime minister after consulting with the presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

Many analysts believe a centre-left parliamentary bloc favourable to Aristide will elect pro-Aristide Senate and Chamber of Deputies presidents.

Colombia bids farewell to slain journalist

BOGOTA (R) — Hundreds of Colombians, many waving white handkerchiefs, lined Bogotá streets to bid farewell to Diana Turbay, the journalist daughter of a former president and the latest victim of a bloody drug war.

About 1,500 mourners, including a semi-faded President Cesar Gaviria, packed Bogotá Cathedral for an emotional funeral for Turbay, shot by her captors Friday when police tried to rescue her from drug-traffickers who held her for five months.

Hundreds more, many waving handkerchiefs in a sign of peace and farewell, lined city streets to watch a long funeral cortege accompany her body to the cemetery. Hundreds of police and soldiers staged a huge security operation along the route.

Turbay, 37, daughter of ex-President Julio Cesar Turbay and editor of a weekly news magazine, was the 26th Colombian journalist killed by drug-traffickers since 1983. They have also killed hundreds of politicians, officials and

police. Soon after Friday's police raid the drug lords announced they were resuming a bloody war on the government in retaliation for police operations against the Medellín cocaine cartel. They also threatened to execute two hostages.

Thousands died in bomb blasts and shootings after powerful cocaine cartels declared war on the state in August 1989, but violence fell off after a truce in July last year.

Security forces stepped up patrols in Medellín, base of the biggest cocaine cartel, following the drug-traffickers' threats and local journalists said the city was tense Saturday.

The unexpected events were a severe setback to Gaviria's policy of seeking peace by offering lenient surrender terms to the drug lords. Two of Colombia's most wanted drug barons, Jorge Luis and Fabio Ochoa, have turned themselves in.

Many prominent Colombians, seeing a unique chance for peace slipping away, made anguished appeals for the drug barons to reconsider.

Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez urged the traffickers to spare the lives of two journalists they still hold. "We are at a point of no return, the nation's fate is slipping from our hands. Only deep reflection by all parties involved can give us peace..." he said in a statement.

Former Medellín Mayor Juan Gomez Martinez, who worked for the release of Turbay and other hostages, appealed for an end to the violence and offered to intervene to help seek peace.

The drug-traffickers kidnapped eight journalists last year to pressure the government into concessions, but five have been freed unharmed. They are still holding Francisco Santos, news editor of the influential El Tiempo newspaper, and Maruja Pachon, director of a state-run film institute.

COLUMN

Rubber tuna may replace real thing

PORT LINCOLN, Australia (AP) — Real tuna could be off the menu at the Australian Tuna Tossing Championships next year as organisers plan to introduce a rubber fish at future titles. Thousands of cheering tourists flocked to the tuna-fishing town of Port Lincoln on Australia's south coast Spencer Gulf to see what could be the last tuna-tossing titles earned using a real frozen tuna. A pair of local residents showed they know how to best handle the denizens of the deep as they buried their frozen fish to victory. Norm Marks became Australia's champion tuna-tosser when he hurled his 10-kilogram fish 14.49 metres, while Jodie Hamilton won the women's event with a toss of 4.64 metres. However, the distances were a little down on previous years as organisers of the event, a showpiece of the annual Tunarama Festival, were forced to use a heavier tuna when nobody could catch the usual eight-kilogram fish. In a bid to ensure greater safety and consistency, organisers now plan to use a specially designed rubber fish, weighing eight kilograms, for future events. "We wanted to use a rubber fish this year, but it's been difficult getting the right weight and balance," a Tunarama spokesperson said. "We're still looking at using rubber next year, but the manufacturer needs to work out proper weighting of the fish and get the flexibility right so it behaves like a real tuna." The chance was sparked by a long-running legal action from a spectator who was awarded more than 11,000 dollars (\$8,580) in compensation last year after she was bit in the back by a flying tuna several years ago. The woman suffered severe back pains and embarrassment because of the incident.

U.S. censors news of pilots' pre-raid porno movies

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. military censors suppressed reports that American navy pilots watched pornographic films before flying bombing missions in the Gulf war, the Washington Post reported Saturday. In a report on censorship of journalists covering allied military forces in the Gulf, the Post said pilots on the U.S. aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy told a reporter "they had been watching pornographic movies before flying bombing missions." But the paper quoted another reporter on the ship as saying a military censor deleted references to pilots watching pornographic movies from "pool reports" given to news media in Saudi Arabia and the United States. The censor decided that the information "would be too embarrassing," the Post said. The paper said the censor also cut out an obscenity used by a pilot from reports of activity on the Red Sea. Officials of the U.S. military's Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran and Riyadh require all journalists accompanying allied forces in the Gulf war to submit their dispatches for "security review" before they are distributed. Reporters are also accompanied by military escorts. The Post quoted a "senior military official" as saying some reporters in combat pools had inadvertently disclosed sensitive information such as troop movements.

Italian high fashion opts for low profile shows

ROME (AP) — Despite the war in the Gulf, it was nearly business as usual as Italian couture designers presented their collections for spring and summer. While the designers did not hold back on the rich silks or the sparkling sequined fabrics that are a trademark of Italian couture, they toned down much of the frivolity that surrounds the collections, such as elaborate runway stage designing, star-studded audiences and extravagant after-show parties. "It would be immoral to celebrate at a time like this," said Giuseppe Della Schiava, president of the Italian Fashion Chamber, "but at the same time fashion is also business, and months of hard work have gone into preparing these collections." Only designer Milla Schonen stayed away because of the Gulf war. With Italian authorities worried about machine guns guarded the entrance to the Modern Art Museum where most of the shows were held, and each person was frisked upon entering. Renato Balestra, whose collection closed the four-day showings, released four doves at the end of his show, in a sign of peace.



Erica Adams, the girlfriend of Willem, son of the South African President F.W. De Klerk

Willem De Klerk's affair 'symbolises new S. Africa'

LONDON (R) — The son of President F.W. De Klerk said in a British newspaper Sunday that his love affair with a coloured woman could symbolise a new South Africa.

Willem De Klerk, who is studying in Britain, and his girlfriend Erica Adams told the Sunday Mirror they were determined not to be parted, despite the sensation their relationship has caused among South African right-wingers.

"It's too soon to know if this relationship can do political damage to South Africa," De Klerk, 24, was quoted as saying. "But I hope we can have a good influence — we are probably symbolic of the new South Africa."

De Klerk has been joined in

Britain by his girlfriend, who is also a student. Their relationship became public earlier this month.

In the Sunday Mirror interview the couple said they were deeply in love but not formally engaged.

Adams, 22, is classified as coloured, or mixed race, under the apartheid system which President De Klerk has pledged to reform. South Africa has 2.5 million coloureds, mostly descendants of mixed marriages in the 17th and 18th centuries.

White South Africans were forbidden to marry or have sex with people of other races between 1957 and 1986 under the Immorality Act, repealed by former President P.W. Botha.

Peking march draws cops, reporters but no marchers

PEKING (AP) — A single notice calling for a peace march in Peking Sunday drew dozens of foreign reporters and even more police but not a single demonstrator.

As many as 100 uniformed and plainclothes police and more than a dozen police vehicles gathered outside the International Club Sunday afternoon waiting for the march.

A notice posted Saturday in a building housing foreign diplomats told participants to gather at the club in Peking's embassy district for a march to Tiananmen Square, about four kilometres west along the capital's main thoroughfare, the Avenue of Eternal Peace.

But the only people to show up were police, reporters and a few curious diplomats, including the

Kuwaiti ambassador and his family and a few Egyptians.

None of the foreigners seemed to know who had put up the notice, or whether Chinese authorities had granted permission for a demonstration. The police refused to divulge any information. A 1989 law requires organisers to apply five days in advance for permission to stage a demonstration.

No protests have been staged in Peking since 1989's massive pro-democracy movement was crushed by the military. While anti-war protests have been staged in many major cities around the world, Chinese authorities have discouraged any such events in Peking both the Iraqi and Kuwaiti embassies have been warned not to stage any demonstrations, diplomats say.

NASA struggles for credibility 5 years after Challenger

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — The shock and the anguish from America's worst space disaster are gone. The wounds, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) says, have more or less healed.

But the sickening, heart-rending sight of the shuttle Challenger disintegrating in mid-flight five years ago Monday remains fresh in the minds of men as the space agency struggles toward an uncertain future.

Experts in and outside NASA agree another disaster this year or next could cripple if not crush the nation's manned space program.

"They're still betting the organisation every time they launch," said John Logsdon, director of the Space Policy Institute at George Washington University.

Last year's trouble — the discovery of the Hubble space telescope's flawed mirror, the grounding of a leaky shuttle fleet, the threatened collapse of the space station project — leaves

little room for bungling, much less catastrophe.

Citing the "very real possibility of losing another orbiter in the near future," the Bush administration's Space Advisory Committee recommended in December that NASA reduce its dependence on the shuttle. Instead of building another spaceship, the panel suggested NASA develop an unmanned, heavy-lift booster to be used for all missions except those requiring astronauts.

Some risk analysts put the odds of disaster at one in 100 shuttle flights. Others say it is more like several in 100.

"If the case is made that we're going to be confronted with a Challenger accident every five or six years, I don't think people have the stomach for that. I know I'm sure not eager to go through that again," said John Pike, head of the Federation of American Scientists' Space Policy Project. For many at NASA, it seems like only yesterday that the shuttle exploded 73 seconds after liftoff, killing the seven astronauts

aboard and halting U.S. manned space flight for 2½ years.

"The accident is something that I can't forget nor do I want to," said shuttle director Robert Crippen. "It is something we need to be sensitive in the way we conduct business to be sure we continue to stress safety, which I believe we are doing."

Crippen was preparing to command an upcoming military mission when the accident occurred. He piloted the first shuttle flight 10 years ago this April, an anniversary he much prefers to focus on.

A 13-member commission appointed by then-President Ronald Reagan determined the accident was caused by a leak in a joint on Challenger's right solid rocket booster. The panel also learned that trouble with the booster rocket joints dated back eight years and that management and communication problems contributed to the disaster, as well as an overambitious flight schedule.

Thirteen missions have been

logged since manned space flight resumed in September 1988 with revamped shuttles and new safety rules.

There now are so many safeguards on shuttle flights that NASA is considering eliminating some of the double-checking and triple-checking of items. J.R. Thompson, NASA's deputy administrator, estimates that would reduce shuttle operating costs by as much as one-fourth; each flight costs \$200 million to \$250 million.

Seven shuttle flights are planned this year, the first one in late February or early March. Eight are scheduled for 1992, including the first flight of Challenger's \$2.1 billion replacement, the shuttle Endeavour.

Twelve flights are planned for 1993. That is NASA's annual goal for a four-ship fleet for the rest of the decade and beyond.

On Monday, at precisely 11:38 a.m. (1638 GMT), the time of Challenger's last liftoff, workers at Kennedy Space Centre in Flor-

ida will balt whatever they are doing and observe 73 seconds of silence. Flags will be lowered to half-staff.

It is an annual rite. Among those pausing this year to remember will be men erecting a massive memorial to the 14 U.S. astronauts killed in the line of duty, four of them in training jet accidents and three in a spacecraft fire 24 years ago Sunday.

The mirrored monument, to be dedicated in May, consists of 92 granite panels. Already, five panels are inscribed, one for each deadly accident. They bear these names:

Theodore C. Freeman; Charles A. Bassett II and Elliot M. See Jr.; Clifford C. Williams Jr.; Virgil "Gus" Grissom; Edward F. White II and Roger B. Chaffee; Francis "Dick" Scobee, Michael J. Smith, Judith A. Resnik, Ellison S. Onizuka, Ronald E. McNair, Gregory B. Jarvis and Christa McAuliffe.

Eighty-eight panels remain.